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April 19, 1881.

Vol. VIII.

Single
Number.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY BEADLE AND ADAMS,
No. 98 WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK.

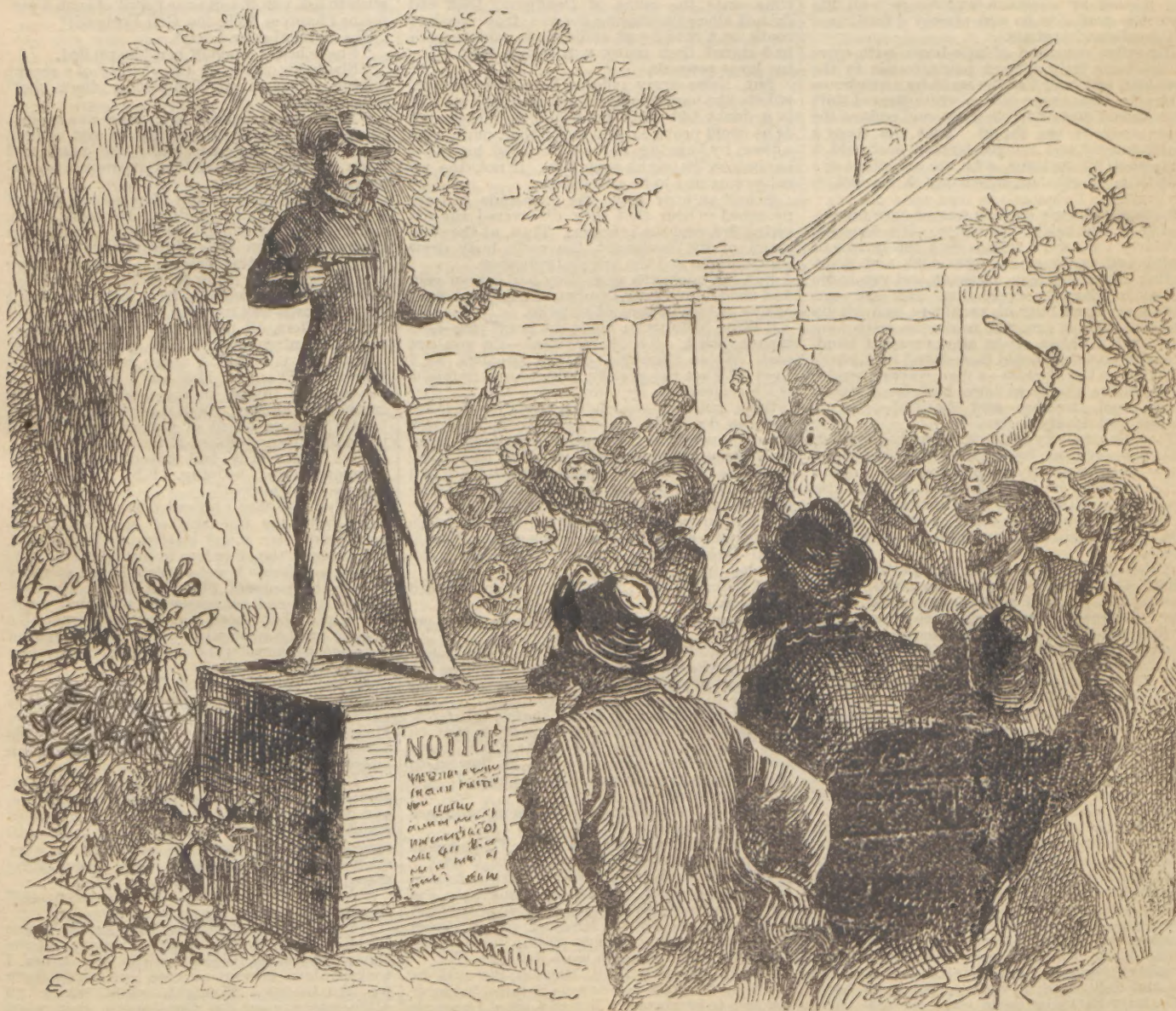
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No. 195.

DEADWOOD DICK'S DREAM; or, THE RIVALS OF THE ROAD.

BY EDWARD L. WHEELER,

AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK" NOVELS, "ROSEBUD ROB" NOVELS, "GILT-EDGED DICK," "BONANZA BILL," ETC., ETC.



"IS THIS THE SENTIMENT OF THE WHOLE CROWD?" DEADWOOD DICK DEMANDED, STERNLY. "DO YOU REFUSE TO RECOGNIZE ME AS AN OFFICER OF THE LAW?"

Deadwood Dick's Dream;

OR,

The Rivals of the Road.

A Mining Tale of "Tombstone."

BY EDWARD L. WHEELER,
AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK" NOVELS,
"ROSEBUD ROB" NOVELS, "BONANZA
BILL, MINER," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

DEADWOOD DICK RELATES HIS DREAM.

It was a warm August night in the month's latter half, and the scene was far beyond the borders of civilization and settlement, upon the level prairie, at the edge of a motte of cottonwood timber.

Up in the starry blue dome, the full moon was soaring with majestic radiance; a soft spring-like breeze laden with freshness and the odor of flowers blew up from the south, and, altogether, the night was one of exceeding beauty.

To a young cottonwood, on the southern outskirts of the motte, a man was securely bound with strong lariats, as if preparatory to the Indian exercise of roasting alive.

Not a great ways from where he was bound, burned a small camp-fire of twigs and buffalo chips, but the lone prisoner at the tree was the only person in sight.

He was a man a trifle above the usual height, trimly built, with every development hardened and nerved by constant experience and life upon the trail, for he was plainly a free rover of the hills and prairies.

His attire consisted of knee-boots, with spurs at the heels, light-colored pants, thrust in the boot-legs, and belted at the waist by a handsome cartridge belt; above this a white flannel shirt with tastily embroidered front and collar—the latter open at the throat. Then, he wore a neatly tanned and fringed hunting-coat, which completed his costume, with the exception of a broad-rim slouch hat, which lay at his feet on the grass.

In face the lone captive was at once prepossessing, if not really handsome. His features, regularly cut, were tinted with the brown of health and exposure; his eyes dark and penetrating, his mouth firm, pleasant and yet liable to become stern in expression. His hair was worn long, down over his shoulders, and his lip adorned with a graceful mustache, with long wavy ends. Taken all in all, he was as handsome a man as one could have found in a year's search upon the prairies—a man whom a reader of character would at once have pronounced brave, cool, reckless and faithful—true to friends, and deadly to foes.

That his captivity at the tree had been short, was quite evident, by the fact that the camp-fire was only partially burned down.

Nevertheless, he made frequent attempts to break away, all of which were unavailing. The lariats that bound him were of strong buffalo skin, cut in strips, and refused to yield their purpose.

"Well, I suppose I might as well stop struggling!" the prisoner finally soliloquized, with a scowl. "Hang me if I fancy my position, however. It's rather uncomfortable to remain long in this one position, and then there's no telling when I am going to get away, if ever. This is off the main trail, and it isn't at all likely that any good Samaritan will happen along in a month or two, to cut me loose."

The aspect was not encouraging, and the prisoner had a keen appreciation of the fact. His place of captivity was some miles away from the main line of overland travel, and the chances were largely that no one would happen along to set him free, until he should die of starvation, or be torn to pieces by wolves.

"Curse that wretch, Cordova," he muttered, his brow darkening. "I was a fool to take the fellow into my confidence, for I have yet to meet the first Mexican who is not treacherous. I might have known he would have played the traitor, but it seems I didn't, and as a result here I am—I, Deadwood Dick, the famous jack-of-all-scrapes, tied to a tree, while my pardner is flying away, to rope in the benefits of my discovery, while all I can do is to remain where I am and deliberate on what might have been, and also, what may be in store for me. If I could but get free, Mexico would have cause to regret the loss of one of its treacherous sons. But just now the premeditated vengeance did

not seem liable to be consummated, and the famous sport, ex-outlaw, and dare-devil of the West could do no better than "rest upon his oars."

The camp-fire burned low, and the rays of moonlight grew seemingly brighter. The great range of prairie stretched off in all nature's beauty, until met by a dusky line, which the human gaze could not penetrate.

Eagerly did Deadwood Dick sweep the moonlit landscape with his eagle gaze, in hopes of discovering some one who would come and assist him from his dilemma.

And, as his good luck would have it, he looked not in vain.

About an hour later his heart gave a bound, as he detected something moving on the southeastern horizon.

At first he could not make out what it was, and was filled with doubt, but gradually it grew larger in proportions, and by and by he had no difficulty in making it out to be a company of horsemen.

Owing to the brilliancy of the moonlight which aided in the extension of vision, he was well aware that they were yet miles away, which was proven, as they grew nearer very slowly. In half an hour they had approached so close, however, that he was enabled to make them out to be a detachment of the U. S. Cavalry, well armed and mounted.

There were about twenty men, headed by a lieutenant and another person whose dress ranked him as a U. S. Marshal.

The discovery caused Deadwood Dick no little concern, for, while there was a chance for his liberation, he felt sure trouble would follow.

To be sure there had been quite a lapse of time since the name of Deadwood Dick had flashed along the mining borders, from north to south, as a road-agent and outlaw, and placards had stared from many a tree and rock, offering large rewards.

But, these army officers have eyes and instincts like hawks, and the prisoner had scarcely a doubt but what he would be recognized. If he could prove satisfactorily that, once upon a time, by hanging he had canceled his debts to justice, it might save him; if not, the results remained to be guessed at.

In half an hour more the cavalcade had approached so near that they discovered the expiring fire, and the prisoner. Then, at the command of the lieutenant, the main body drew rein, only he and the marshal riding on.

In a few moments more they had drawn rein and dismounted near Deadwood Dick, and stood gazing at him in evident surprise.

"Why, hello! who have we here?" the lieutenant cried. "Look, marshal,—do you not see? We've stumbled onto a bonanza, as I live! If I am not greatly mistaken this fellow is the road-agent, Deadwood Dick!"

"No, not the road-agent, Deadwood Dick, but the detective, Deadwood Dick, sir," was the calm retort of the captive—"the man who, by hanging, forever paid his debt to justice; then rose to take up a different life-trail, and hunt down law-breakers and villains, whether they be professional outlaws or citizens."

"Ah! so you admit you are the notorious person who has so long made the name of Deadwood Dick famous, do you?" the marshal demanded, interestedly.

"I claim the title; I have never been ashamed to own it, sir!"

"Then what are you doing here in such a position?"

"Betrayed by a comrade, I was taken when asleep and bound to this tree—then deserted."

"What object had your companion in doing this?"

"We were bound on a trail against a band of counterfeiters, and I am of the opinion that he was in some way leagued with them, and therefore left me here to starve, while he flew on to their retreat to put them on their guard."

"Counterfeiters, you say?"

"Yes—a powerful gang of them, who are doing a big business."

"What gang do you refer to? There are at present several operating through the West."

"The one I am after, I believe to be unknown to the authorities, and at the same time the largest and most perfect organization of the kind in existence, west of the Missouri. When I learn what course you propose to pursue toward me, I may be able to explain more definitely."

"Well, sir, as a U. S. Marshal, it would be my duty to arrest you as a desperate character not safe to be abroad. But as a man, I propose to give every deserving dog a chance, and knowing of some good deeds you have done in behalf of justice, I do not propose to molest

you now, when in a trap. Lieutenant, cut the prisoner's bonds."

The officer obeyed, but evidently with bad grace, and Deadwood Dick once more stood forth a free man.

"I am thankful for your kindness, marshal," he said, "and offer you my hand in friendship. It is not often I shake hands with any man, but when I do, I want to shake hands with a man who has a heart—a man who is honest and not disposed to kick a person because he once had a bad reputation. I am one who fights for right, to the death. Several times I have been driven from my own and have fought back. If a man insults or attempts to run over me, I generally try to pay him off in his own coin. I despise a cheat, a tyrant, a liar and a ruffian. I never allow a foe to take me when I can help it; I shoot a scoundrel or ruffian when I think he is a curse to the public. When I was a robber I only took from whom I thought got their money dishonestly. That's the photograph of Deadwood Dick, and now, if you want to hear about counterfeiters, I am at your service."

"I will give you my attention as soon as preparations are made for the night," the marshal said, shaking the sport's hand. "Lieutenant, signal the men to strike camp."

In the course of half an hour the camp was struck, and Deadwood Dick in company with the marshal, the lieutenant and another individual with long brown beard, who was introduced by the marshal as Mr. Akronelle, were seated in the moonlight apart from the soldiers, engaged in smoking.

It was then, at the marshal's request, that the ex-outlaw said:

"Now, about the counterfeiters I spoke of. I wish to ask you if you ever heard of such a person as Phantom Moll, the Girl Footpad?"

The marshal gave a start.

"I have heard much of her," he replied.

"She holds out up in the vicinity of a recent mining strike called Tombstone, don't she?" Dick queried.

"As to that I cannot say. She was a great trouble and terror to the miners and settlers down on the Bozeman trail, last year, and made it sickly for those who attempted to capture her."

"Well, she's up around Tombstone, now, I reckon. I had a strange dream the other night, and that's what started me out. I don't often dream, but when I do it is always verified, afterward. In this dream, I imagined there was a new mining camp called Tombstone City. This I have since found to be a fact. I dreamt that the town was troubled by road-agents and counterfeiters, all under the lead of a female called Phantom Moll. Now, you may smile, when I tell you that I never heard of such a person as Phantom Moll, until her name and vision came to me in my dream—which occurred, by the way, about a week ago."

"Oh! I have heard of persons dreaming of those they were destined to meet in the future, but of whom they had never heard before," the marshal said, nodding. "By the way, how did your dream end?"

"I dreamt that I set out for the new mining camp with the intention of breaking up the gang, and after many adventures I succeeded, and brought the offenders to justice. This portion of my dream is not so plain in my memory as was the name of Phantom Moll. Then, detached from and yet connected with the dream, I dreamt that there was a young orphan—a cripple by the way, who was owner by right of heritage, of considerable mining territory. Her name was Cora Clyde!"

As he spoke, Deadwood Dick was gazing at his feet, but some subtle instinct told him that one of his three auditors started, perceptibly. He looked up, presently, scanning each of the three faces, minutely, but failed to detect on either a trace of surprise.

"I thought I befriended this girl," he continued, "and the townspeople rose against me, and drove me out. I then organized a band of agents, and waged war, right and left, until road-agents, counterfeiters and ruffians, were all cleaned out, and peace and prosperity restored."

"And you put confidence in this dream, eh?" the marshal asked.

"Yes. We were mining over on the Bitter Creek—I and a Mexican named Cordova—at the time; and having perfect faith in the dream, I took Cordova into my scheme, and we set forth for Tombstone. To-night, while taking an after-supper nap, the treacherous cuss must have partially drugged me, and bound me to the tree, where I found myself, on awakening. Taking my weapons and horse, he has sloped."

The marshal was silent a moment.

"Do you propose to pursue your original purpose of hunting up this dream business?" he finally asked.

"Of course I do," Deadwood Dick replied. "I shall give the matter a thorough investigation, and doubt not but what I shall find verification for the best part of my dream."

"Well, perhaps. I, myself, have some reason to believe that counterfeiters may exist in that region. Therefore, as you are just such a man as I believe would do good service, I will, as is in my power, appoint you as one of my deputies, which will put the law in your hands. I will also give you an order by which you can draw rations for yourself, and men, at any neighboring Government post!"

CHAPTER II.

A "HEARSE" AND ITS "PILGRIMS."

THE road leading from Silverville to Tombstone City was one of the wildest of all that wild region. Silverville nestling upon a sort of mountain plateau five hundred feet above the level of the prairie was simply a collection of half a dozen rude cabins, and a log tavern, with a population of thirty or forty people, all of the sterner sex.

No woman had yet lent her enchantment to the paradise of Silverville, and yet there were some marriageably inclined pilgrims there, ready to harness up at any eligible opportunity. Rising the mountain from Silverville, toward the north, the stage trail ran on through a wild district to a little placer burg called Gloryville, to which all the regular mails were sent, before sturdy Joe Rapp started a daily stage from Gloryville to Silverville, and subsequently from Silverville to Tombstone City the new Eldorado, in the depths of the mountains. As soon the discovery of Tombstone became an assured success as a mining-camp, Joe Rapp's stage was always well patronized, and he made two trips a week from Gloryville to Tombstone and return, with Silverville the noonday station.

Joe Rapp was a shrewd, far-seeing genius, and always had some plausible excuse to detain passengers at Silverville several hours longer, each trip, than was necessary for them to supply themselves with luncheon at the "House-that-Jack-Built," which was the high sounding title of the single tavern. As a consequence the passengers generally lubricated freely, and Joe got a percentage on the "ile" sold, and as much as he could comfortably hold, himself. And those who pretended to know did as ever that Joe's storage capacity was at least "a quarter of a barrel."

Then the veteran Jehu would yell "Board!" spring to a standing position upon his driver's box, and away would dash his six-in-hand at a furious speed, which would make the old "Hearse" as the ponderous vehicle was called, career from side to side in an alarming way, that caused inexperienced passengers' hair literally to stand on end.

Jericho Joe, as he was frequently called, was a reckless driver, yet, strange to say, he never had an accident or mishap from this fault.

About a month after the meeting between Deadwood Dick and the U. S. Marshal, the "hearse" en route for Tombstone, drew up before the Silverville tavern, and came to the usual noonday halt, while Jericho Joe yelled out the pleasant announcement—"Thirty minnits fer grub an' likker!" which caused a greater share of the passengers to disembark and rush pell-mell for the bar room, which also was provided with a lunch-counter. For the most part, the passengers consisted of bearded, roughly dressed fellows, with mining outfits strapped to their backs, although there were a few more genteel appearing and better dressed individuals, whose peculiar vocations might have been classed either as adventurers, speculators, sports or gamblers.

Among these was one man whose handsome face, tasty attire, and nonchalant manner pronounced him to be the sport and dare-devil, Deadwood Dick. As he sauntered leisurely into the tavern, using a light sporting rifle as a cane, he attracted more attention than he was really aware of.

The miners eyed him with curious glances, and whispered among themselves; the better dressed passengers regarded him with something like doubt in the expression of their glances.

There seemed to prevail a sort of suspicion against him, but what, he did not know, unless by some means unknown to him, they had learned who he was.

As he had ridden on top of the stage, over

from Gloryville, some of the passengers had not obtained a glimpse of him until now.

Without paying any attention to their glances, he took a position at one end of the lunch counter, and began to eat such lunch as was set before him, resolved to avoid a disturbance, if indeed there was any desire among the miners to create one, which he suspected was the case.

Among those near his end of the counter was an ordinary dressed man, with a recently shaven face, and peculiar gray eyes, who imbibed a "horn" of whisky between every two or three mouthfuls of victuals, and who seemed inclined to be talkative on the subject of road-agents.

"So there's danger of road-agents, between here and Tombstone, eh?" he asked of Jericho Joe, who was stowing away "fodder," at his right.

"Waal, I should ponder!" the proprietor of the "hearse" allowed, pouring out a brimming glass of a decoction sold for Old Rye, and gulping it down. "Reckon you've never been over this trail, eh?"

"Oh no—never. I just left my seat in the Senate, at Washington, last month, in order that I might come out into this country on a trip for the benefit of my health."

"Phew! Then you're a Senator, hey?" Joseph demanded, in surprise.

"Exactly, my friend."

"S'pose that's yer darter, out in the coach, eh?"

"Yes, that is my only daughter. It is more on her account than my own, that I am anxious concerning these robbers who, you say, infest this trail."

"Waal, I allow et won't do ye much good to worry, pard, fer jest as likely as not ther stage'll git stopped, to day, by Phantom Moll and her gang. When she sez 'Whoa!' it's bizness every time, an' 'tain't no help fer it, ca'se she's got plenty o' help tew back her—fifty or sixty masked cusses, armed to the teeth."

"It is shameful!" his senatorship declared, with indignation, which he in some degree washed down with another swig of "bug-juice." "I shall report the matter to the President on my return to the Senate, and he will undoubtedly order the army to clear out these outlaws."

The remainder of the conversation Deadwood Dick did not overhear, as he finished eating and adjourned to the outside of the tavern to enjoy a cigar, which was more than he had done in partaking of the frugal repast.

The stage-coach was standing in the road in front of the tavern, and as Dick stepped out, a young lady was looking from the open door, and by accident or on purpose, he could not tell which, she dropped a handsome feather fan, to the ground.

Natural gallantry prompted him to step forward, pick it up, and return it to her, though something told him that the fan had been dropped on purpose to attract his attention, rather than by accident.

"Thank you! I am both surprised and pleased to see you here," a low, softly-modulated voice said, as he returned it.

"No thanks are necessary, lady," the ex-outlaw answered, considerably puzzled. "I presume you have mistaken me for some other person."

"Oh no—not a bit of it. I knew you the moment you left the stage. But, there comes papa; pray don't let him see you speaking to me."

Still more astonished Dick stepped back from the coach, and was in the act of sauntering away, when the Senator emerged from the tavern.

"Hello! What's the matter here? Have you dared to address my daughter, sir?" he cried, with a flaming countenance, as he intercepted and confronted the man from Dakota.

"If you refer to the young woman in the coach, my dear sir, I allow that I took the liberty of picking up and restoring to her a fan she chanced to drop upon the ground," Deadwood Dick replied, looking the Washingtonian square in the face. "If I have perpetrated any particular insult in so doing, I'll apologize on a postal-card, first chance I get."

The Senator grew more red in the countenance, at this, and muttering some unintelligible expression, turned abruptly, and entered the coach, while Dick sauntered down the road to walk off his surprise.

"Well, here's a go, before I've even got to my dream's destination," he muttered. "I fancy I've seen this noble Senator, somewhere, but cannot place him, now. His eyes are

familiar, and the pallor on the lower portion of his face indicates that he has recently shaven off a heavy beard. As to the girl—blame me if I know her. She is good-looking, has got red hair, and a pair of eyes with condensed devil in them. What strange fatality has thrown me in contact with her? Who is she that she knows me, and I don't know her? What has the future in store with this meeting as a forerunner? Humph! I reckon I'd better not meddle with these three conundrums, at all. As for his senatorship, I—I—I don't quite understand him yet."

He went back to the tavern where most of the passengers were collected outside the door, supposing that the stage was about to start. But to his surprise he found that they were evidently waiting for him, as some had drawn weapons, and all glances were directed at him in none too friendly an expression.

Jericho Joe seemed to head the party as spokesman, and as Deadwood Dick came up, and paused a few paces off to await developments, he said:

"Waal, stranger, the aspect lukes kinder warlike, eh? Lukes like as ef thar was liable to be a funeral hereabouts, don't it?" he said, in his jocular way.

"I should say it did," the young Dakotan replied, pleasantly. "What's the go? Preparing for a siege against the road-agents?"

"Waal, no—that is, there's a leetle defickelty ariz amongst the passengers consarnin' you, which they've left me tew settle."

"Difficulty concerning me?"

"Yas. Ye see the byes hev somehow got it inter their heads that you're the famous road-agent who uster perambulate up around the Black Hills under the name o' Deadwood Dick, an' ef sech be the case, the'd jest as lief you'd not take passage in the same coach with them from hyar on ter Tombstone, allowin' yeow are in league with Phantom Moll an' her gang."

"Oh! that's it, eh? Well, now, my friends, set your hearts at rest on one score. I am the remarkable structure of humanity known as Deadwood Dick. But I am in the employ of the Government, and not liable to arrest for my past career. If you can read, I have a paper here which fully explains why I am here—or at least what kind of a hairpin I am."

And as he concluded he drew an official looking document from an inner pocket and handed it to the stage-driver.

Now Jericho Joe had at some distant day in his past eventful life acquired the art of reading and spelling, which enabled him to read the document, which he did do, several times over, whereupon he returned it to Deadwood Dick.

"Well! what do you make of it?" the sport-detective demanded, triumphantly. "Are you satisfied?"

"Yas, I'm satisfied that you're all square," Joe replied, climbing up to the driver's box. "I allow the boys'll accept o' anything thet suits me. Eh, pilgrims? I pronounce Deadwood Dick on the square, and as hevin' a legal right tew go through to Tombstone on the hearse—ain't thet enuff?"

"I reckon that's satisfactory," one of the miners said, and the others nodded assent.

"Then all aboard!" Joe yelled, picking up the lines.

And in a few moments more the ponderous vehicle rolled away down the rough, tortuous mountain road into the heart of a wild, rocky, timbered country, at a terrible rate of speed, the fractious horses at a gallop, and Jericho Joe handling the triple pair of lines and cracking his whip dexterously, while he sung and cursed the leaders, alternately.

It was not until they were nearly a mile out of Silverville that Deadwood Dick made the discovery that the man who had announced himself as a Senator was one of the outside passengers of the coach, and the discovery caused him to wonder what was the cause? He felt sure that there was some good reason, or his senatorship would not have left his daughter alone in the coach below.

The afternoon passed rapidly.

The country they passed through was wild enough, and yet of great natural scenic grandeur. In places the stage would whirl abruptly around a narrow bend in the road, on one side of which a terrible abyss yawned dark and awful, and into which the stage frequently threatened to tumble.

Night drew on, and the full moon rose brilliantly in the heavens, as if to light the dangerous trail over which the rumbling, jolting stage rolled.

"Get yer pocket books ready, boys!" Jericho Joe yelled, cracking his whip. "We're gittin'

along nigh about the place where Phantom Moll an' her gang makes their appearance. No use o' tryin' ter fight, fer thar's allus five to one in her favor, an' when she's fired upon she allus cleans out every passenger and sends him *en route* fer the happy land o' Canaan, you bet!"

On rolled the "hearse" as if eager to encounter the dusky knights of the road—on, on, until Jericho Joe gave vent to a peculiar growl and jerked his horses suddenly back upon their haunches.

"Road-agents!" he uttered; then the passengers upon the top of the stage saw a swarm of dusky figures suddenly arise as if from the bowels of the earth, and surround the stage-bearded, masked men, armed with carbines and looking well fitted for their lawless occupation.

"Throw up your hands! Death to him who offers resistance," rung out the stern cry, on either hand.

CHAPTER III.

PHANTOM MOLL AT HOME.

It was a brusque, business-like command that those who were burdened with plethoric pocket-books failed to appreciate, and in consequence thereof, several of the uninitiated drew and cocked their revolvers, but were prevented from using them by others who knew enough of this road-agent business, to be certain that fight was inadvisable, especially when the knights of the trail numbered four or five to every one of the passengers.

"Come, gentlemen, dish over your valuables!" cried a burly individual, who stood a little apart from the rest, and seemed to be the commander. "If you will persist in traveling our road, you must reasonably expect to pay toll. So fork over your cash, chronometers, an' yer jewelry, deeds, chattel mortgages, and so forth, and you can go on to seek yer Tombstone. No mulishness, now, as we've a private cemetery, around the hill, yonder, where we chuck refractory patients under the sod!"

Those within the stage forked over such wealth as they chanced to have, and then those on top were politely invited to disgorge—all except Deadwood Dick and the Senator.

The latter was not paid the least attention by the road-agents; and when they came to Deadwood Dick, one of the masked men said:

"You can git off o' the stage, my friend. The captain would like to see you!"

"I prefer to remain where I am," Dick replied, coolly. "I have a few dollars in money, and if you prefer that, I will hand it over."

"Our orders is to fetch *you*, sir, instead of your wealth!" the spokesman said, sternly. "So you might as well climb down, first as last, or we shall have to draw a bead on you. Dead or alive, was what Phantom Moll said."

"Well, if this is the case, I presume I'd better hang on to the life consideration," Dick said, jumping from the stage. "I s'pose you're sure you've got the right man?"

"Oh yes. Deadwood Dick is too well known for any mistake to be made," the road-agent replied, with a gruff laugh. "Go ahead with yer stage, Rapp; we'll call on you again, some other time!"

Jericho Joe accordingly cracked his whip and the stage rolled away.

"A clever piece of acting, gentlemen," Dick heard the Senator say, to those on top of the stage, in a sarcastic tone.

"You are probably aware of the fact that it cost our friend of Deadwood no serious inconvenience to stop over with the outlaws—at least he didn't shed any regretful tears at being detained. Hal! hal! I presume we shall all learn a lesson."

Then the stage rolled on and the rumble prevented Deadwood Dick from hearing more.

He bit his lip, and his blood boiled within his veins, however, at what he had heard, for he saw the stab this stranger had given him. He knew in him he had an enemy, and doubted not that it was he who had been the silent projector of the attempted disturbance at Silverville.

His meditations were interrupted by a hand being laid upon his shoulder, and a voice saying:

"Deadwood Dick, do you propose to accompany us willingly, or shall we have to bind and carry you?"

"You need not put yourself to that trouble," Dick replied. "I recognize the odds against me, and acquiesce. Proceed and I will follow."

"You are wise. Our orders were to shoot you if you became balky. You will permit us to blindfold your eyes, then we will start for head-quarters."

This was accordingly done, and Dick was led

off, with a man holding each arm. By the tramping he judged that the remainder of the gang were bringing up the rear.

For fully two hours the march continued, without cessation, ere a halt was made, and the bandage removed from his eyes.

To his surprise he found himself in what was evidently a mammoth cabin, with walls and roof of heavy logs.

The main apartment was at least eighty by one hundred feet, and then there were board partitions which suggested the existence of other apartments.

The roof of logs was built of sound hewn timber, at a steep pitch, and the crevices between the logs filled with clay or mud. There was no floor to the cabin further than the earth, and, what was most remarkable, not a window, door, or any mode of entrance visible anywhere, even in the partitions, except it were a huge chimney of adobes which was built over a fire-place at one end of the big room.

Deadwood Dick noted all these particulars, in a few glances, then turned to review his captors in the light of numerous lanterns that were hung about. They were a tough-looking lot—roughly dressed, with belts at the waist containing small arsenals of knives and revolvers; and each man wore a long false black beard and mustache, in addition to a mask of oil-cloth that covered all of the upper portion of his face except the eyes.

"You can roam about wherever you please, now," the evident sub-commander said, "until the captain comes, because, as you will perceive, there is no chance for you to escape."

"I see you've got rather a tight pen, here," Dick replied. "I dare say, however, there is more than one way to get in and out of it. What time may I naturally expect to see the captain?"

"Oh! presently. She's very busy counting money, now, I guess."

Then the man, who was called Cal, by his companions, turned away, and Dick was left to himself.

The place was provided with a rude bar, at one end, and going to it, Dick purchased a cigar of the masked keeper, lit it, and then stretched himself out upon a bench, a series of which ran around the sides of the room, to meditate upon his peculiar position.

How his little venture was destined to turn out he could not foresee. As yet he had not received very harsh treatment—indeed, his weapons had not been taken from him—but he felt that the arrival of the famous female outlaw, Phantom Moll, would be the event of his future destiny.

Then he thought of his official documents, and knew that it would be disastrous for him to lose them, as it would put him out of power until he could again consult with the U. S. Marshal, who had issued them. Watching a chance when no eyes were turned upon him, he took them from his pocket, doubled them into as small compass as possible—then slipped them into a crevice in between the logs, where they would not be readily noticed, but where he could find them, if opportunity came for him to escape.

He then changed his seat to another part of the cabin, feeling considerable satisfaction in knowing that if he was searched all they could find was the small amount of money he had with him.

About half an hour later Phantom Moll appeared in the main part of the cabin. Just how she entered Dick could not tell, as she was approaching him, when he discovered her.

Of medium height of women she was possessed of a form, strikingly beautiful, symmetrical and graceful, as relieved by a neat-fitting suit of male attire, with knee-boots, corduroy jacket, light-colored pants, and hunting-shirt, and jaunty slouch hat upon a shapely head, set off by a wealth of wavy brown hair, which fell back over her shoulders.

Her face above the point of the nose was concealed behind a crimson cloth mask, but the mouth and chin and the throat were fair to view, and bespoke the fact that the whole face was rather pretty. Her hands were small and shapely, and covered with numerous rich gold rings, with diamond settings. In her belt she wore a pair of ivory-handled revolvers of large calibre, and a glittering dagger with a gold-mounted hilt.

Such were the points that Deadwood Dick noticed of this female brigand, who approached him, unhesitatingly, her glancing eyes surveying him sharply through the holes in her mask.

"Deadwood Dick!" she said, pausing a few paces from him, and speaking in an impressive

tone—"Deadwood Dick, are you aware where you are, and whom you are confronting?"

"Well, according to my best eyesight, I should judge I am in an outlaw stronghold," Dick replied, quietly, "and according to popular belief, I should infer that I was now in the presence of a ghost."

"In both of which conclusions, you are correct. I am a spirit—an embodied phantom from beyond the grave to rule and lead for others to follow."

"Well, now, you appear to be rather a healthy ghost, too," Dick allowed, sarcastically. "How's the other ghosts and ghostesses, may I ask?"

"It matters not. Your words seem to indicate that you doubt that I am more than simple flesh and blood?"

"Presumably—yes. I rather opine you've struck the wrong chap to successfully play the ghost on. I've had some experience in that line myself, and don't take any stock at par value."

"You are a strange man. Do you not believe in things disembodied?"

"Not on the present occasion. One reason is, I don't happen to notice your angelic wings; then again, your appearance is so exceedingly life-like and natural, that I dare to presume if I was to stab you with a dagger, you'd be a very sick ghost."

"You needn't experiment any, in the matter. I see you are not to be fooled—so we will come down to business. Follow me to my private office, and we will converse in regard to what disposition is to be made of you."

This matter-of-fact invitation Dick resolved to accept, and accordingly arose to his feet.

Part of his remarkable dream was being verified, according to his prediction, and he was now eager to follow it out to its end.

As soon as he arose Phantom Moll led the way toward one of the partitions, which as they approached it, parted in the center and slid to either side enough to admit of their passage, when they slid to, again, by some means Dick did not just then discover.

They were now in a narrow hall; passing through which, and past several doors on either side, they entered another room off of the end of the hall. This proved to be a continuation of the cabin, being in width and length about twenty by thirty feet, and provided with a board floor, which was covered with a carpeting of bear and wolf skins, with the furry side up—a matting at once neat and luxurious.

The furniture consisted of several fur-covered chairs, a round table in the center of the room, on which a lantern was burning—a couch of furs at one side, and near it a fire-place, in which a few sticks were smoldering. In addition there was a machine at one side of the room strongly resembling a cylinder printing press, above which was a swinging shelf, containing an enormous pile of what appeared to be plates of lead mounted on blocks of wood. These Dick at once concluded were the plates from which counterfeit money was printed.

On the opposite side of the room was a large open front desk, containing numerous pigeon-holes, each one of which contained several packages wrapped in red, blue and yellow tissue paper, and numbered on the ends that protruded from the holes.

Dick took in all these points at a roving glance, and then accepted the easy-chair that Phantom Moll set forward for him, after which she seated herself facing him.

"Now, then, we are alone, and can talk business," she said, lighting a cigarette, and blowing a cloud of smoke, ceilingward. "What do you think of my quarters?"

"I think you have a remarkably appointed den," Dick confessed, "where you might enjoy an honest life very much. As it is, I cannot say what enjoyment you have."

"Oh! I get along all right, never fear. 'Tis a jolly life we outlawed sinners lead—but, as you have been a road-agent in the past, I dare say you know all about it. I was surprised, however, when I heard that you had taken up sides against those of your own kind."

"You are mistaken. My band of road-agents were not desperadoes and cutthroats by choice; it was only when dogged by the minions of justice, that we bit back."

"Nevertheless, you were outlaws, and got the name of being a desperate crowd. Even now you are liable to be lynched whenever recognized as Deadwood Dick."

"Oh! perhaps—again, perhaps not. I manage to get along through life with sufficient breath for human navigation. How came you to know I was coming to these parts?"

"Oh! I was posted soon after you started."

"By the cursed Mexican dog, Carlos Cordova, eh?"

"Yes, by him, for one. I didn't pay much attention to his report, until I learned of your being appointed deputy-marshal. Then I made up my mind it would be best to look after you."

"Ah! I think I see whence emanated your information," Dick said, scratching his head. "I had until now quite forgotten the man Akronelle, who was with the marshal."

Phantom Moll laughed lightly.

"You are shrewd at guessing," she said. "Akronelle was the man. Did your remarkable dream prepare you for capture by my men?"

"Yes. I dreamed that I was captured, and that I escaped."

"That you can never do. You have two fates to choose from. You are a shrewd, capable, wonderfully gifted man, who would be an advantage to our gang as a member. Therefore I offer you the position of captain of the band, under my generalship, when you consent to shoulder our obligations, swear our oaths of fidelity, and submit to our rules of initiation. On the other hand, if you refuse, you have the choice of being riddled by the bullets from a hundred rifles, to-morrow, at sunset. How like you the prospect?"

CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER WOMAN AND A DONKEY.

"I CANNOT say that I particularly admire it," Deadwood Dick replied, "but, forced to choose between the two evils, I should prefer the chilled plumage to the captivity."

"Pshaw! you are very foolish. Death is ever to be avoided, when life can as well be had. Here I offer you a position next to myself in rank, which means a free and easy life, plenty of money and every desired comfort that money can procure."

"And just enough rope to elevate me, when the Vigilantes might chance to get hold of me?"

"Bah! they never caught Phantom Moll, yet, and I'll wager you're sharp enough to elude them. Supposing I were to give you your liberty, and you were to go over to Tombstone—what think you would be the result? Why, they'd string you up to the handiest tree as being one of Phantom Moll's agents, because your fellow-passengers suspected you, and felt that their suspicions were confirmed, when they saw you peaceably submit to the invitation of my agents. Ha! ha! Lieutenant Dixie was telling me about it."

"Oh! yes; it was proposed by an old pilgrim on the stage that I was a member of your gang, or else the other passengers would never have thought of it. I'll have to keep his kindness in memory, or I may forget to thank him. If your doubts as to my welfare hinder you from granting my release, I beg you to dismiss them at once, because I am well calculated to take care of myself."

"Because you have a little paper from the U. S. Marshal. Will you be kind enough to let me look at it?"

"Impossible, as it is not in my possession at present—nor do I fancy I should turn it over if I did have it."

"Oh! wouldn't you? I may have different views of the matter. But superfluous conversation, in such a case, Deadwood Dick, is useless. You came to this region with a fixed resolve to break up my band of road-agents and counterfeiting business. I know you from repute to be a great man—a man whom I have every reason to prefer as a friend, rather than as an enemy. You have refused two choices I tendered you; I will now make you another offer—which is very foolish, as I have you in my power and need not necessarily offer terms. If you will give me your word of honor as a man, that, on being released you will at once and forever withdraw all hostility toward us and quit this part of the country, for good, I will pay over to you in good money five thousand dollars. Still better, join the band and marry me, and you shall have the whole command."

"Neither proposition can I find it convenient to accept," Dick said, decidedly. "You have it in your power to release me, or kill me. Do as you choose."

"Then, you shall die, to-morrow at sunset!" the female road-agent cried, angrily, smiting the table with her clenched fist. "You will find that I am not to be trifled with."

As she struck the table one side of her mask became unloosened, and it fell aside, so that Dick got an instant's glimpse of her face, ere she hastily replaced it. It was a pretty face he saw—such a face as ill became the calling its

owner pursued, and though he only obtained a single look at it, it was indelibly photographed upon his memory.

"The mishap was opportune," he said. "I was wishing for a view of your face."

"I presume you'll admit that it's a pretty face," she retorted, not seeming to be much put out.

"Too pretty, I should judge, to belong to a robber and murderess!" he responded, gravely enough.

"You are insolent," she cried, and pulled a little cord that hung down from the ceiling. "You have till twelve, to-morrow, to reconsider your decision; failing in which, you will be shot at sunset."

Two brawny ruffians entered at this juncture and seizing Dick by the arms marched him out. As he was about making his exit he gave the bandit queen a haughty glance and said, with biting sarcasm:

"By-by, fair Spook! Though I may not see you again directly, you may expect to hear from me. Ta! ta!"

And he laughed his old peculiar wild laugh, that used to resound weirdly through the gorges of the Black Hills, in those days when he and his trusty followers followed the golden trails.

Instead of returning him to the main room of the great cabin, the road agents disarmed him and thrust him into a side room opening off from the dark, narrow hall.

Then they closed the door and locked it on the outside, and Dick was left to his own meditations.

His new prison was about the size of the queen bandit's apartment, but furnished only with a pile of bearskins and a torch which burned from a crevice in one side of the log walls.

The light, however, was welcome, and throwing himself upon the pile of furs, he began to consider what was best to do.

It was a matter, however, that deliberation did not materially improve, as facts as they stood, were not too pleasant. He did not doubt but what Phantom Moll would have him shot, rather than allow him to escape and organize a siege against her and her band, and, on the other hand, he was resolved to risk the shooting rather than join the ruffianly crew, and thereby back out of the mission he had set forth to accomplish.

These seemed to be the only parts of the case to consider, for escape appeared to be out of the question.

He lay thus in deep thought, until a clock in an adjoining apartment chimed out the hour of twelve. Then, overcome with weariness, he dropped off into a sound sleep. When he awakened, it was with a start. Some one was shaking him by the arm, and on raising to a sitting posture, he discovered that it was, judging by the form, a woman dressed in men's clothes—in fact, just as Phantom Moll had appeared, except that the present person wore a feather in her hat and a scarlet velvet jacket, instead of one of corduroy.

Otherwise she had the same appearance as the bandit queen, both in symmetry and grace of figure, and in general attire.

"Well, what do you want?" Dick demanded, supposing it was in fact Phantom Moll. "It isn't sunset, is it?"

"Sh! keep quiet if you value your life," was the whispered reply. "I have come to set you at liberty, so rise and follow me, and plant your footsteps cautiously, or we risk discovery, which would be disastrous."

"But, hold! Before I leave this place I must get some papers I concealed in the main room."

"Here they are. I saw you when you concealed them, and took pains to get them for you."

"Thank you," Dick said, as he received them and thrust them into his bootleg. "I am placed under great obligations for this act alone. Surely you are not Phantom Moll?"

"I am not. Who or what I am, you will in all probability never know. Enough that I come to set you free. Follow me, now, cautiously, and I will soon have you out of this."

Dick obeyed.

With his commission restored to him, he was glad enough to get away, where he could have a chance to make and perfect plans for the capture of the powerful and defiant gang of road-agents and counterfeits.

Taking his hand in her own, which was soft and small, she led the way from the room through the door, into the hall, where she paused and lifted up a trap door in the floor, whereat was disclosed a square aperture, against one

side of which a ladder furnished the only visible means of descent into what appeared to be a bottomless pit.

"You descend first, and I will follow and close the trap," Dick's strange rescuer ordered.

He obeyed and soon found himself standing in what appeared to be an underground passage. Here he waited until his rescuer came down, when she produced and lit a lantern, which enabled him to take a survey of his situation.

They were standing in a long passage which was barely high enough to admit of their standing erect, and which was cut out of solid rock.

The masked female now led off with the light, and Dick followed, a silence prevailing between them.

A few rods from the ladder the passage grew wider on either side, and here, Dick noted, were at least three score of horses, tied to improvised mangers, full half of the number being saddled and bridled, ready for use.

Passing on, the vault grew narrower again, and continued so for a hundred yards, when it suddenly ended in front of a dense jungle of young pines, which was threaded by a narrow pathway, well worn, and barely wide enough to admit the passage of a horse and rider.

At the mouth of the vault a masked man was reclining upon a pile of grass, but he merely looked up with a grunt, as Dick's guide led the way from the vault, on into the depths of the jungle.

Following the tortuous windings of the trail, they, half an hour later, emerged upon the crest of a small mountain, barren of timber.

Here they came to a halt, and gazing back in the direction whence they had come, Deadwood Dick beheld a great stretch of dense pine forest as far as the naked eye could reach, said forest covering several neighboring mountains, and presenting everywhere a landscape of dark green, as viewed in the light of the spectral moon, which hung low toward the western horizon.

Day was already gradually breaking in the east, in which direction they were proceeding, on gaining the mountain crest.

Before them the mountain descended gradually, rough and rocky, and sparsely timbered, into a narrow, open valley which wound around the base of another mountain, five miles away, and through which valley ran a silvery stream of water.

A trail descended from where Dick and his rescuer stood, toward the valley—another trail ran off to the right in the depth of a steeper mountain and forest.

"There! I have now brought you where you can easily find your way to Tombstone City," the masked guide said. "The trail to the east, up through the valley, leads there."

"Thanks, I will take it, and try to reach the camp. In what way can I repay you for your service in rescuing me, lady—for I know of no other name to address you by?"

"No payment is required, sir. I rescued you because I heard of your capture by Phantom Moll's gang, and it was in my power to do so—because I have always heard that you were a brave, fearless man, who would ever fight in behalf of honest and honorable women, rather than against them!"

"I am glad you have heard so well of me. My life has not been altogether unchequered with dark lines, but I reckon it has not been entirely made up of bad deeds. But, before I go, will you not favor me with your name—some title at least by which I can remember you in kindly gratitude for the service done me?"

"Well, if you persist, call me simply Belle. Now, you had best go, for if my—if Phantom Moll should discover your escape, pursuit would be given, and you might return a prisoner. Also, never sleep except with one eye open, while in Tombstone, for I all-would find it worth while to look out for Number One, while there. Have you no weapons?"

"Not at present. The road-agents appropriated them."

"Then, take one of my revolvers, as you may need it. If I see you again, I'll step up and take it out of your belt, and you'll know it is returned to its owner."

She handed him a handsome six-shooter of business size, and then tipping her plumed hat, she turned and descended the mountain by the right-hand trail.

Watching her until a jutting spur of rock hid her from view, Dick thrust the revolver into his belt, and strode away down the eastern trail.

By the time he reached the bottom of the rugged valley day had fully dawned, and a

hazy red sun shot its rays athwart the crest of the eastern horizon.

After bathing his face and hands in the waters of the clear sparkling stream, he set out at a brisk walk for Tombstone.

Just about the time he came to a bend in the valley, he spied a very scrawny and withal a very demure-looking donkey grazing composedly along the banks of the stream.

No claimant for the animal was in view, and the donkey was also bridled. Discovering which, Deadwood Dick decided he would not finish his journey on foot, but impress the donkey into his service.

He had no difficulty in approaching and securing the animal, but when he attempted to mount, he found that he had a job before him. The donkey absolutely refused to be mounted, and showed an ugly disposition. But, Deadwood Dick was too old a horseman to be fooled in this way, and soon landed himself successfully upon the donkey's back, whereupon he threw his arms about the neck and locked his feet about the belly of the victim, in triumph.

Then the donkey began to rear and snort and buck, but failed to dislodge his unwelcome passenger; whereupon with loud and discordant brays, and ears laid back, he began to run at the top of his speed.

Hang on, for dear life, did Deadwood Dick, and it was in this rather ridiculous manner that he made his first *entree* into the young mining city of Tombstone, amid shouts of laughter from a crowd of idle bystanders, and the unearthly brays of the donkey.

CHAPTER V. TOMBSTONE.

THE flying horseman or rather donkey-man soon attracted the attention of all the people of the mining-camp, and the narrow gulch street was lined on either side, by as rough and uncouth a crowd of humans as Dick had met in many a day, most of whom were miners, equipped with picks and pans.

The donkey continued his mad race until he came opposite a large slab shanty, bearing above its door a sign inscribed as follows:

"EUREKA SALOON.

'SHIAN SAL, PROP'R."

Here the donkey stopped abruptly, probably calculating to heave his unwelcome burden over his head.

But he failed in that calculation, for Dick still retained his bug, and remained seated. Then, when he saw that the bad-tempered animal was likely to canter off again, he quietly slipped to the ground.

"There! You can go, now, beauty," he laughed. "You struck the wrong side of an earthquake, when you set out to buck off a Dakotan, I can tell you."

The donkey seemed to be cognizant of its defeat, for it laid back its ears and brayed loudly, whereat the bystanders laughed.

Then Dick turned and entered the "Eureka." It was a rough two-story building. The upper part, reached by an outside staircase, was run as a boarding and lodging house, by an old Dutchman, while the lower story, as indicated by the sign, was run by 'Shian Sal, as a saloon.

On entering, Dick found himself in a long roughly-finished apartment, containing a number of deal and gaming tables and chairs, while at the opposite end was a long counter or bar, behind which was a large mirror, on either side of which were shelves containing bottles, decanters and glasses.

A Chinaman, with a flat comical visage and almond eyes, not to mention a very elaborately ribboned pig-tail, presided behind the bar, as dispenser of liquid refreshments, and a single glance at him satisfied Deadwood Dick that he was "nobody's fool" if he was a Celestial.

At the time of his entrance there were but two occupants to the saloon, aside from himself and the barkeeper.

One of these was evidently the proprietress, and the Dakotan gazed at her in no little astonishment, for he saw that, in feature, she very closely resembled a face he had lately seen, elsewhere.

And the face was that of Phantom Moll, the female road-agent! The eyes, the mouth, the contour of features, the hair—all were those of his late captor. The form, too, was nearly the same, though if anything more petite and graceful, its symmetry of contour being revealed by a neat fitting costume consisting of patent leather top-boots, pants of buckskin-colored cloth, with gold fringe upon the outside seams; a white

duck vest, and white flannel shirt, with collar open at the throat; a wide-rimmed white felt hat, pinned up on one side with a gold butterfly, with diamond eyes, and a jaunty jacket of same color as pants, and likewise liberally decorated with gold fringe. She wore a pair of serviceable revolvers in her belt, and a knife hilt peeped from its sheath upon her hip.

Such was a description of the person whom Dick saw seated at a table, engaged at a game of cards—a young woman apparently not over eighteen years of age.

If surprised when he gazed at the woman, Deadwood Dick was more than astonished when he surveyed the man with whom she was playing, for he beheld his own likeness before him, in every respect—a man whose form and face in every detail resembled the young Dakotan—whose features, eyes, mouth, mustache, hair and shape of head, were all a perfect counterpart of those of Deadwood Dick.

His dress, however, consisted of a full suit of spotless white duck, with slippers upon his feet and a round scarlet smoking-cap on his head, while in his belt he wore just an even half-dozen of dangerous-looking revolvers, all at half-cock.

So forcibly was he impressed with the appearance of these two persons, that Deadwood Dick paused a few moments near the door and gazed straight at them, scarcely able to credit what he saw.

At first he was tempted to believe that the young woman was indeed Phantom Moll, but a closer study of her expression of countenance convinced him for the time being, to the contrary.

But who was the chap who looked so much like himself?

That was a question he was obliged to pronounce a "sticker," until subsequent revelations should answer it.

The attention of the players was finally attracted to the watcher by a grunt from the barkeeper, whereupon the young woman threw down the cards and thumped the table with her fist.

"Well! by blazes!" was her ejaculation. "Two of a kind, as I live! Do you see, Missouri!—thar's yer double!"

"Humph! the fellow does copy my mug quite creditably. I say, stranger, what's your business?"

"That depends somewhat upon circumstances," Deadwood Dick replied, advancing and not liking the query any too well. "One needn't trouble to ask yours, I perceive."

And the Dakotan dropped into a seat, handy by.

"By which I presume you mean to infer that I am a professional card-sharp?" the counterpart said, flushing angrily.

"Exactly. That's what I sized you up for, without knowing your name. No offense, I trust."

"You'd be crossing Jordan, I allow, if there was any particularly!" was the reply, with a hoarse chuckle. "May I ask who you are—as I notice that you and I somewhat resemble each other?"

"Certainly!" Dick replied. "The handle I'm most familiarly grasped by is Deadwood Dick."

"The devil you say!" the counterpart gasped.

"Well, by blazes!" the young woman ejaculated, springing to her feet. "It struck me that's who you was, the moment I saw you. Shake hands, Deadwood! My name's 'Shian Sal—formerly o' Cheyenne, ye see—and I'm the boss of this ranch, and am right glad to welcome you."

"If so, why so?" Dick queried, shaking her soft, warm hand as requested. "I don't know that I ever had the honor of your acquaintance before?"

"Ha! ha! ha!"—the girl laughed, merrily—"do ye mind that, Missouri? The honor of my acquaintance! I'll be shot if he ain't the first chap thet ever allowed et was any honor to 'cum 'quainted wi' 'Shian Sal. But I allow I ain't no bad piece, Deadwood, 'cept that I like to gamble, smoke and occasionally take a lemonade with a stick in it, and sometimes I pop over a rough, jest to keep my hand in and let 'em know Sal is old bizness. As fer yer knowin' me, probably ye never did—leastwise not till now. But, you—by blazes I've allus know'd you since I first anchored over in 'Shian; that is, by report. An' when any galoot used to tell me you was a bad pill, I told him he was a liar. Even the newspapers he'd to admit thet you never hurt anybody, 'less they deserved it, or commenced the row. And, says I: 'Ef I ever meet that Deadwood Dick I'm goin' to shake hands with him, because he's a

chap after my own likin', who ain't afeard o' nobody or nothin'."

Dick smiled, and his memory bounded back to his faithful girl-pardner of many a by-and-gone scrape, valiant Calamity Jane, whom this new acquaintance reminded him of.

"I am glad to have met so warm an advocate," he said. "By the way, how is the look-out here in Tombstone?"

"Bully!" 'Shian Sal declared with emphasis.

"The miners is getting plenty of paying dirt on the surface, an' my shaft over in the bluff is panning out some rich quartz. You bet yer boots thet prospects *aire boom'n'*!"

"But hardly so for you!" Missouri said, addressing Dick, with a somewhat peculiar shrug of his shoulders.

"Think not? Why?"

"Oh, because. I am inclined to think the citizens will object to your mixing into the population. Road-agents and horse-thieves are shown but little mercy, here."

"Presumedly, you are right. But you see I happen to be prepared for any objections they may have."

"Good fer you, Deadwood! Don't let 'em scare you, a bit. 'Shian Sal happens to own quite a chunk of this town, an' ef ye want help, you come to me. I allow I've got a repertation around this hyar burg, fer bein' able to take keer o' myself an' one or two ter spare, an' them as wants to git cleaned out ginerally sails right inter the Eureka! Even Mister Mike Missouri, heer, who claims to be the boss of the town, don't keer to say 'yes' to a dispute, when I say 'no,' fer fear he'll suddenly git sleepy, an' wake up in another camp."

"I don't think I have ever confessed myself afraid of you!" the gambler said, scowling.

"No, but you dassent call 'Shian Sal no bad names, tho'!" the woman replied, with a cool laugh. "Come, Deadwood, have a cigar, seein' as this is the first time I've met you."

Dick accordingly followed her to the bar, where she ordered the Chinaman to set up the best.

Then she took occasion to say in a low tone: "You want to keep your eye peeled, or you'll be surprised."

"Ef? I don't understand," Dick said.

"I mean to say, you've got an enemy in camp!"

"Is that so? Who is he?"

"A new pilgrim, who calls hisself Senator Clyde, and puts on more importance than a young rooster."

"I've seen him. What's his lay-out?"

"Dunno. Got in late last night. Went straight to work warnin' the miners that the noted outlaw, Deadwood Dick, had arrived in the vicinity and joined the gang of Phantom Moll, and was a-goin' to raise thunder, in general. He come fer me, an' I told him he'd better go take a sweat."

"What impression did he succeed in making?"

"Big! way up! Why he jest set out the bug-juice an' smokers fer the hull crowd, and told 'em that it was necessary to organize a standing band of Vigilantes, ready to string up every road-agent who entered the camp, without talk or trial."

"I dare say I shall receive a call, then," Dick said, with a dry laugh.

Then he explained how he had been captured by the road-agents, and how the so-called Senator had taken advantage of the fact to hint to the passengers that he, Dick, had been captured by his own men, as a blind.

"He explained about the capture here, and pronounced it a blind," 'Shian Sal disclosed. "The miners kinder tuk to it, an' I reckon as how they'll try to get up a row."

"Which would not surprise me in the least!" Dick replied, a trifle bitterly. "I seldom if ever have located in a place, so far in life, that they have not given me an invitation to bounce."

It has grown rather a second nature to me, to be on the watch for those who would strike me, and I rather fancy that they who fool around me never make much money or success."

"Good for you! I like a man of your calibre, who will fight back when set upon. You stay handy around where I am, an' if they pitch onto you, just count on it thet 'Shian Sal will be in the row."

"Don't. I never want other people to entangle themselves in quarrels on my account."

"Pshaw! D'y'e s'pose I'd stand by and see a friend hurt? Not much!"

"You are my friend then?"

"I gave you my hand, didn't I? Only friends ever get a grip at that, and you're the first one that has, here in Tombstone."

"Then, if a friend, tell me one thing:—are you not at the same time an enemy?—are you not Phantom Moll?"

The girl laughed, outright.

"No, I am *not*," she answered, decidedly. "You are the first one ever to ask me that. Do I look like her?"

"Enough so, that I could almost swear you and she were identical."

"Well, is it any more strange a chance resemblance, than that existing between you and Missouri?"

"Hardly, I fancy. Who is he—what is he?"

"My would-be husband—if he could!" and here Miss 'Shian laughed, again in a musical, hearty way. "Oh, he's a bad pilgrim, is Mike Missouri, as quick and spry as a cat, and handles his tools, skillfully. He's afraid o' me, tho', cause I can pull a pop-gun jest a jiffy spryer than he can. Then, too, he'd like to marry my gold mine across the creek, not allowin' that he keers a cent fer me. He'll quarrel with you if he can—so look out!"

Dick thanked her for her confidence, and then sauntered to a seat, across the room, where he picked up a paper and began to read.

He had only been seated a few moments, however, when Missouri approached him, with a dark scowl.

"See here!" he said, in a gruff way; "you and I might as well understand each other. They say you're quite a fellow, on your muscle, while I allow I'm boss of this town. Now, we luk alike, an mistakes are likely to occur, so it becomes my duty to request you to vamoose, I being first to locate."

"And it becomes my dignity to refuse!" Dick replied calmly. "I don't generally leave a place till I'm made to!"

"Then I'll make you!" Missouri growled, drawing a knife, and leaping forward, with a deadly purpose gleaming in his eyes.

But the man from Dakota met him half-way—parried the blow of the knife, with one arm, while with his right fist he dealt the ruffian a stunning blow in the face and he fell back upon the floor.

Just at this juncture the door opened, and a gang of armed men marched into the room.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MARSHAL SHOWS HIS TEETH.

QUITE a lively outlook was there now for Deadwood Dick—for he had no doubt the squad of men had come on business with him.

Missouri scrambled hastily to his feet, with a string of oaths, and laid his hands upon a pair of revolvers in his belt, but he did not draw them, as the man from Dakota already had him covered.

"You see you are not able to cope with me," Dick said, coolly, "and advise you to let Deadwood Dick alone. The next time you seek a quarrel with me, I shall kill you, very likely, instead of letting you go so easy!"

He then turned to meet the party of armed men who were approaching him.

Evidently wise enough to accept a good piece of advice when it was tendered him, Mike Missouri went over to the bar and took a drink, before seating himself. 'Shian Sal waited upon him, in person, and took pains to torment him with a reference to his battle.

"Well, you found the man from Deadwood to home, when ye called on him, didn't you?" she asked, with a grin.

"Pshaw! I only tried him to see if there was any fun in him."

"And found there was more than you had bargained for, eh?" the girl laughed. "You'd better keep wide out of his trail, Missouri—he's an earthquake—a reg'lar volcaner, is that Deadwood Dick?"

"Bah! I'll lay him out, if I ever have a square deal. I reckon the Vigilantes want him, now, however," and he nodded to the squad of miners, who were headed by a burly, bewiskered ruffian—every inch a six-footer, and evidently one of the class known as "bad 'uns," in the mining districts.

Led by this chap, the Vigilantes approached within a few yards of Deadwood Dick, who had his arms folded and stood gazing at them, while a cocked revolver was held ready for use, in his right hand; then by an order from the leader, the whole gang stopped.

After clearing his throat with a business-like "ahem!" the bullwhacker glared down upon the Dakotan with all the ferocity he could summon, and said:

"Young feller, you're the very inderwidual we would fasten our paws on. Are you aware what an ugly body stands before you?"

"Estimating you according to your personal

appearance, I should infer that I was standing in the presence of the body of a combination of elephant, rhinoceros, kangaroo and what-is-it?" Dick retorted, composedly.

"Waal, ye jest hit it, youngster—I am every inch a combination o' what ye sed, an' can chaw up sech pigmies like you in a single gulp. Behold in me Frightful Fred, the Vigilante chief, an' ther great Caperin' Cannibal o' ther West. I'm a chawist and a gouger. I am—a reg'lar old yowlin' he-wolf an' wildcat. I hev chawed up an' swallered a hundred sech chaps like you, an' when I want a meal I jest waltz right up and bite off some galoot's ears, or nose!"

"If you are really such an extraordinary animal, you ought to be put in a cage and sent out with a traveling menagerie, Barnum would make a fortune out of you," Dick retorted.

"Oh, ye needn't poke fun, thinkin' you kin git away, fer ye can't do it. We're the Vigilance Committee of this hyar city o' Tombstone, an' I, Frightful Fred, aire the chief-cook-an'-bottle-washer o' the concern, an' we've got orders ter arrest ye!"

"By whom given, sir?"

"By ther chief citizens o' this hyar town, an' fer the cause o' you're bein' connected wi' Phantom Moll's gang!"

"That is false. I have no connection with that or any other gang; in fact, I came here on purpose to hunt down that gang, and have papers to prove that I am a deputy U. S. Marshal!"

"That won't go down, pilgrim. We're business, we citizens o' Tombstone, an' don't allow ourselves to be taken in by no sharp, no matter ef he's got papers sayin' he is President o' the United States—not fer we. We don't like no one ter settle hyar in this town whose reputation is bad, an' tharfore we citizens did hold a convention last night, an' passed the resolution that no sech a chap as Deadwood Dick be 'lowed in ther town. So, now, either you kin git up an' dust, or we'll put yer neck in a noose, you bet!"

"In the name of the law, I refuse to go!" Dick replied, his eyes flashing. "I have a legal and lawful right to remain here."

"Not when the people ter a man say no!" Frightful Fred replied. "Heer's a paper w'ot 'll tell ye jest w'ot is w'ot!"

And he took from his pocket a large sheet of paper, on which the following was written in a heavy hand:

"NOTICE!"

"Whereas: It has come to the hearing of we the undersigned citizens of the city of Tombstone, that a notorious cut-throat and desperado called Deadwood Dick is at large in this vicinity, and

"Whereas: Said Deadwood Dick is under suspicion of coming here for the purpose of robbery and general outlawry, and is suspected of being leagued with the bloody-handed female foot-pad, Phantom Moll.

"Resolved: That shall the said notorious character, Deadwood Dick, seek to enter our town on any pretext, or for any purpose whatever, we the undersigned settlers and citizens thereof, shall, through our Vigilance Committee, order him at once and forever to take his departure; and

"Resolved: That if he shall refuse so to do, or shall renew the intrusion at any subsequent period, he shall be captured alive and taken to the first convenient tree and lynched—hung by the neck until dead."

Then followed a long string of signatures in various styles of chirography.

When he finished perusing the document, he tore off the portion containing the names and thrust it into his jacket pocket, while the other portion he tore into bits and scattered upon the floor.

"I'll keep the names for future reference, as I may want to repay a debt of gratitude!" he said, significantly. "As for the other portion of it, I laugh at it and refuse to go. I have the law on my side; drive me forth if you dare, and I'll make this town cause to regret the day they struck the initial war-blow at Deadwood Dick. Do you understand me, sir bullwhacker? I refuse to go! So if you want the concert to commence here, just warble forth the note. I am ready to fight the gang of you, and you may have heard that Deadwood Dick always comes out right side up with care!"

And so confident and so eager for a scrimmage did the man from Dakota appear, that the Vigilantes stared at him in wonder.

The man who had the assurance to boldly and fearlessly stand up and invite the attack of a dozen armed foes, must be more than ordinary mortal, they argued, and such a man was best carefully inventoried, before attacked.

Even the bullwhacker, Frightful Fred, was somewhat surprised, but the bullying element

in his composition, was such as was not easily conquered by words.

"You'd better surrender!" he growled. "Why, ef we was ter pitch on ter ye, thar wouldn't be as much as a grease-spot left, when we got through with ye!"

"Of you and your crowd—probably not," Dick retorted. "Don't think you can intimidate me by blowing, my friend, for you cannot do it. There's only a dozen of you, and I dare say if you take pains to search the records of my past you can find chronicle of more than one occasion when Deadwood Dick has cleaned out twelve better men than you are."

"That's true as preachin', Fred Cook," 'Shian Sal declared, coming up, "and as I'll shove in my 'sixes' in any scrimmage you have with Deadwood, hyar, the likeliest move ye kin make, is retreat—fer I allow you know my style o' shootin'!"

"Well, I'll take yer advice, gal, but ye recollect that I don't give up beat. I'll cum back, directly, wi' ther hull o' the town ter back me, an' see ef the infernal road-thief won't cave, then!"

And, directing his men to follow suit, he left the saloon. When they were gone, 'Shian Sal turned to Dick.

"Well, it turned out different than I expected it would," she said. "I didn't know but I should have to set Ching Chang a-moppin' up gore."

"Which you would, if things had not taken the turn they did," Dick averred.

"What are you goin' to do?" she asked—"stay and brave it out, or vamoose?"

"I shall certainly remain until it becomes so hot that I have to go!" was the firm reply.

"If you will lend me a revolver, I will go out and saunter around town, now."

"That will be risky!"

"Pshaw, no! It will only illustrate to them that they've stirred up the wrong man for a coward."

She accordingly lent him her pair of weapons, he promising to return them by evening. This made him three, all of which he placed conspicuously in his belt, and where they could be reached, handily.

Then he set forth upon the main and only street the young mining would-be city boasted of. It was not a large place, by any means, having existed for only a few months. There were a couple score of log cabins scattered about on either side of the creek, a grocery store, a milling establishment where quartz was crushed and the mineral washed out, the Eureka saloon, of which 'Shian Sal was boss, and another combined saloon and dance-house, further up the street, which was in full blast, night and day. Then some sanguine mortal had started, as the sign in front of a shanty proclaimed, a "THEATRE," particular emphasis being given to the sound of A, by its superior size. The bulletin-board, which was papered with a hand-printed bill, announced that a company of Metropolitan Stars would appear every night in the "highly sensational farce" of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," the admission being placed at "four bits."

The appearance of Deadwood Dick upon the street at once attracted attention from knots of men.

Judging by the people he saw, Dick drew the conclusion that the large share of the miners had quit work, for some cause or other, and he rightly reckoned it was because of his presence in the town.

They were grouped in various places, engaged in conversation, the drift of which he was well aware was toward him, but he did not betray that he had paid any attention to the matter.

Instead, he sauntered leisurely up the street, taking a look at the town as he went, and scarcely noticing any one whom he passed, yet seeing all.

He had rather anticipated a street attack, but none was given. The bystanders whom he passed, surveyed him in sullen silence, and not a shot was fired.

In the course of his stroll he took in the dance-house, but remained only a few minutes, after which he returned to the Eureka saloon. 'Shian Sal called him to one side, as soon as he had entered, her face more serious in expression than he yet had seen it:

"I've been doing a little more promiscuous scouting for you!" she explained.

"Oh, have you?" Dick replied. "What success did you have?"

"Enough of it, such as it is. Take my advice, Deadwood, and vamoose. If you don't they're goin' to take you, sure as blazes, to-night, and when they take you, your neck will

be the forfeit. At least, that is what the sworn decision is!"

"You believe they mean business?"

"Yes, I'm positive of it. Every approach to the town is now guarded, and the sentinels have orders to shoot you, if you attempt to escape. To-night, at dusk, the whole population will turn out, *en masse*, and either take you and hang you, or die in the attempt."

"Well, according to that, I must have earned my Tombstone in coming here," Dick returned facetiously. "I wonder if these worthy residents propose to put me in pickle, after they lynch me."

"I don't know. You're mighty cool about it!"

"I can stand it to be cool," was the answer, with a grim laugh, "because, according to all popular belief, my future residence may be in a somewhat warmer climate."

And then he laughed, again, recklessly.

"You will try to make your escape before it is too late, will you not?" Shian asked, eagerly.

"No. I propose first to talk the matter over!"

He procured, then, a large sheet of blank paper, and with a marking-brush and ink, which Sally chanced to have, he fixed out a poster, containing the following:

"NOTICE!"

"Deadwood Dick, the ex-road-agent, and now a Deputy-Marshall, appointed by U. S. Marshal Bird-sall, will deliver an important address, here, this evening, to the citizens of Tombstone. All are invited to attend, and bring their shootin'-irons with them!"

Then did the Dakotan leave the Eureka, cross the street, and tack the notice upon a large dry-goods box which stood beneath the outspreading branches of a giant cottonwood tree.

Later the notice was read and re-read by a crowd of wondering residents, who were at a loss to understand what was the next thing to follow. Just as the sun was setting that night, Deadwood Dick crossed over from the Eureka, and took his stand upon the box.

CHAPTER VII.

A BOX SPEECH AND A DISAPPEARANCE.

His audience was already collected. A hundred or more roughly-dressed, long-bearded veterans of the pick and cradle were gathered before the impromptu orator's stand, and then there were some women and children, mixed in with the uncouth audience.

Every man had at least a couple of revolvers in his belt, and several also had an accompaniment of knife and rifle.

Taken as a whole, they were not a handsome assemblage, nor too honest-looking, whisky having left traces of frequent carousals on more than one countenance. Among the crowd, as he took his stand, Deadwood Dick could not see anything of Shian Sal, at which he wondered, for she had been absent from the Eureka for upward of two hours. Nor could he see anything of Senator Clyde in the assembly, but looking across the street he discovered him seated at an open window, in an upper story of the Eureka.

Tempted was Deadwood Dick to draw a revolver and shoot him where he sat, as he was well able to do, but a second thought admonished him to bide his time.

After glancing sharply over his audience, he drew a cocked revolver in either hand, and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen: I am not surprised to see you all here, for I felt sure you would want to hear what I have to say. As you may guess, I am not an orator by profession, but when called upon to defend myself, I opine my tongue never fails me. Now, my errand here, to-night, is to ask your kind attention to a few facts which I shall administer to you, and ask your sensible consideration of the same."

"Waal, go ahead, wi' yer ark. I opine we kin listen, anyhow!" one of the miners said, gruffly.

"Thank you," Dick replied, bowing. "I will try to be as brief as possible. To begin with: years ago I had the doubtful honor of being a road-agent chief, and by several offenses, made myself a target for the darts of the law and its advocates. I, however, succeeded in escaping as many times as attacked, until I finally gave up the life for one more quiet and peaceful. But, even then I was pursued and hunted for old scores, until not long ago, I was captured, and bung."

"After being left for dead, I was cut down and resuscitated by a friend, and thus, while I hung and paid my debt to nature and justice, I came back to life a free man

whom no law in the universe could molest for past offenses. Since then, however, I have been molested, frequently, and find the same greeting is extended me in your town, which I have visited as a servant of the law, rather than as a breaker of it. I am here as a U. S. Deputy Marshal, to arrest and break up a gang of counterfeiters, who, allied with a gang of road-agents, exist in this vicinity under the leadership of Phantom Moll. Now, gentlemen, this is not chin, but fact, and I've got the papers to show for it. So what I want to know is—what is your object in wishing to banish from your midst, one whose plans it is for your interest to second and promote?"

There was a moment's silence, after Dick's little speech; then a miner stepped forward:—

"Well, young feller, ef no one else can't answer you I can—and my name's Josephus Washington Blathers, frum Denver. Ye see, I've roughed et thru this hyar mining territory, all the way from hyar back ter ther first excitement at Pike's Peak, an' I've hed a b'iler full o' experience wi' boss-thieves an' road-agents, till I know they ain't ter be trusted wi' a pin's value. Tharfore, I allow yer forged deputy papers, nor any other tricks, can't hood-wink us. We've got ye hyar whar ye aire sure, an' ef we know ourselves, Phantom Moll will lose one o' her shinin' lights!"

"Is this the sentiment of the whole crowd?" Deadwood Dick demanded, sternly. "Do you refuse to recognize me as an officer of the law?"

A grim murmur of assent was heard among the crowd.

"Then I pronounce you a gang of ruffians and law-breakers yourselves, and hear me swear it—that I will have the satisfaction my position enables me to command—I will gather around me a few faithful fellows and make it so sick for the ones whose names were appended to that paper to-day, that they can have no choice but flight or death. Only when you come forward, ask Deadwood Dick's pardon and join his band of Law Protectives, will you be safe!"

"Now then, you have heard me. You can have me as an ex-outlaw and citizen, or as a law enforcer, who will make this town deserving of the ominous article it resembles in name—or, you can refuse all that and sail right in and take and lynch me, recollecting that I shall shoot the first man who sets the ball in motion, and as many mere as is in my power, before I have to submit to overwhelming odds."

"Then shoot me first!" the big bullwhacker, Frightful Fred, cried.

"Stop! stop! fly to cover!" a miner cried, pointing toward the bend, around which a band of forty or fifty masked horsemen came charging at the top of their horses' speed, uttering discordant yells the while.

Taken by surprise the street assemblage thought of nothing but their own safety, and made a precipitate rush for the Eureka and other neighboring shanties. But a rattling volley from the carbines of the road-agents dropped an even half-dozen ere they could escape.

Then without a pause the cavalcade dashed madly down through the town, without pausing, and disappeared around the lower turn.

When they had gone the Tombstoneites once more began to creep forth from refuge, and congenially curse themselves for running.

And for another reason, too.

For in the excitement of the moment their late orator, the lively Dakotan, had also very suddenly disappeared.

The discovery caused the crowd to re-collect upon the street and discuss the matter, for the loss was extremely annoying, when they had been so sure of their man.

Some argued that he might have been caught up by the road-agents and borne away to safety; others had conflicting theories without number, until a street fight seemed impending, when Senator Clyde made his appearance upon the scene.

"See here!" he cried, authoritatively; "stop this wrangling and look about you. The outlaw may not have got out of reach yet, if you are spry. Search the tree above the box. Ten to one you'll find him snugly ensconced among the branches."

"Ef any galoot wants to go up thar an' run ther risk o' gittin' his brains blowed out, he kin do it—but jest count Frightful Fred frum Frisco out o' the ticket!"

"Git a lot o' shot-guns an' rifles, an' fire 'em up into the tree!" suggested another miner.

"I have a still better plan," the Senator announced. "Some one tap the tree pretty deep with an auger, and plug it with powder and

leave a fuse sticking out. Then build a fire around the tree, and blow it to pieces. It will be pretty likely to bring down your man."

This plan was good, but dangerous to the man with the auger, should the Dakotan be in the tree; therefore, it was finally decided to bombard the tree with a howitzer, which the miners chanced to have.

The juvenile cannon was accordingly brought forth, loaded to the muzzle with powder and slugs, and the muzzle pointed toward the top-most section of the tree.

It was then touched off, and a report followed that made the hills echo.

When the smoke cleared away, they perceived but very few branches upon the tree, the volley having scattered and riddled everything in its path.

Nor could they find anything of Deadwood Dick. The only conclusion left, was that he had escaped—an opinion which was confirmed by Shian Sal, who came sauntering down the street, about this time, and inquired the cause of the racket.

"Why, you durned lunatics!" she cried, laughing and slapping her hands—"you've jest been tuk in an' sold out fer a couple of pounds of powder—sure's preachin'. I see'd Deadwood Dick walkin' leisurely out o' town, apiece up the gulch, jest as I cum in. Axed where was he goin', an' he said to bring a detachment of troops an' clean out the town. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha! ha! eh?" Senator Clyde growled. "It must be quite amusing to you!"

"So it is! I'm tickled 'way down into my gaiters, to know that Dicky of Deadwood has come skip over ye. A right smart chap is Deadwood, an' when fools pick him up fer a hunk o' lead, they generally find out that he's a dose o' burnin' lava!"

"Humph! one would think you were a friend of his! You'd better go home an' put on dresses, young woman, instead of espousing the cause of such ruffians."

"He's not half the ruffian you are, old snouser!" the girl fired back.

"What!—you call me a ruffian—I, a Senator and eminent financier—I'll box your ears for that, my pert miss!"

And he aimed to slap her upon the cheek with the flat of his hand. But, skillfully dodging him, Sal dealt him a stinging blow over the left eye, with her fist, which knocked him quite over upon the ground. On rising to his feet, his Honor the Senator, instead of renewing the attack, made for the stairway leading to the lodging-house, amid shouts from the bystanders.

The next morning placards were posted in prominent parts of the little mining town, bearing the following notice:

"FAIR WARNING!"

"This is one of Deadwood Dick's visiting cards, by which invitation is extended to the honest and law abiding citizens of Tombstone to at once join Deadwood Dick's Law Protectives, as every man who does not join this order, within ten days, is doomed. All wishing to come over to the side of the law, can wear a gold dollar upon his shirt front, at six o'clock each evening."

DEADWOOD DICK,
Deputy U. S. Marshal."

CHAPTER VIII.

A CORNER IN RUFFIANS.

By this extraordinary notice the people of Tombstone were apprised that the man they had turned so determinedly against, had been, while they slept, in their town to laugh at them in defiance.

Enraged to a great pitch they were, and notices were posted along the different approaches to the town, offering large rewards for the capture of the famous ex-outlaw.

Several days passed without bringing events of any importance, but in this time by the free use of money, of which he seemed to have a great quantity, Senator Clyde was working himself into popularity. He also used his best endeavors to create prejudice against Shian Sal, arguing that she being an apparent friend of Deadwood Dick, was, consequently, not a safe person to be at large.

Sally was not long in learning of the influence that was being exerted against her, but took it quietly. She perhaps knew that there were few within the contracted "city" limits of Tombstone who would dare insult or tackle her—she on several occasions having cleaned out more roughs than one in a free fight. Therefore while the Tombstoneites were likely to hearken to Clyde's financial persuasions, that was about as far as they were willing to go.

One evening about a week after the events

last narrated, a large crowd of the rougher element were congregated in the Eureka, where they were seated about tables smoking and drinking, and conversing in an undertone, ever and anon glancing at the handsome, queenly figure of 'Shian Sal, behind the counter.

It was evident that the drift of the conversation was toward her, but if she noticed it, she made no sign that she did—was outwardly calm and composed.

Senator Clyde was not present, but a burly ruffian, Jack McCoy by name, seemed to take the Senator's place as the leading spirit, for later, in the evening, when all of the gang were pretty well affected by frequent lubrications, McCoy arose, and said:

"Miss Sally of 'Shian, I am called upon, this evening to address you for a few short moments, in behalf of the citizens of this illustrious city. Et appears by all popular belief that you are not fully appreciated as a citizen, and feeling in sympathy with you they wish you well away from this town. Therefore, you having established a business here, and they not desiring to drive you from it by force, they have volunteered to give you a thousand dollars, if you will quit the town!"

"And they put you up for their orator did they?" Sally asked, sarcastically.

"I have the honor of being the spokes in the case," McCoy announced, unblushingly.

"Then you had better go and bury yourself!" was the girl's retort. "If you should happen to mind my business too much, you know what expenses you will be put to for a funeral—and coffins have raised five dollars apiece at that, since I come here to Tombstone."

"You don't mean that you will resist the appeal of the law, do you, girl?"

"I mean that if you think to bulldoze 'Shian Sal, you're off the narrow gauge!" was the reply. "I wasn't born in the woods to be skeart out by wildcats, and ef you don't want a decrease in yer population before the census man comes around next time, the likeliest thing you kin do is keep right away from me."

The speech had the effect to cause a scowl among the auditors, for they now were well aware that there was danger ahead for them.

Several had been the occasions when some ill-tempered wretch had provoked a quarrel with her, and a funeral had followed.

"But, see hyar, young lady, that ain't a-goin' to pass muster in this crowd. We won't let et pass. It's generally known for a fact that you are friendly to our declared enemy, Deadwood Dick, an' you've got to get out, at once, or suffer the consequences. Refuse, and we'll draw our revolvers and shoot you. Business is business, and the quicker you accept our liberal terms the better it will be for you!"

"I accept them so quick that I refuse very decidedly!" Sal retorted sharply, whipping a pair of revolvers from her belt. "Peanuts is all you need say, if you mean fight."

"Yas, by jim-cracks, an' ef ye can't say jim-cracks nor purtators, ner peanuts, screech out cabbage!" roared a stentorian voice, belonging to a stranger who entered at this juncture.

"Hello!" he continued. "What's ther matter? Is anything wrong? Has somebody struck ile, diskivered a comet, or invented a patent? Do arybody want wet bet thet Grant ain't our next president?—hes any galoot got a pocket street railroad he wants to loan? Thunderation, gentlemen, what is ther matter?"

"The matter is, old man, thet ye'd better git right up an' dust out o' here!" McCoy cried, bristling up with importance. "This is a secret tribunal of ther citizens o' Tombstone, an' no one is allowed heer 'cept citizens an' newspaper reporters!"

"Then I allow you've hit me on ther bullseye, feller-citizens—right plum on ther spot o' magnanimous accomplishment, fer a newspaper chronic am I—a histrionic shinin' light o' ther perfish—ay! I am a seventh wonder o' the world, gents, am I—Uncle Sam'l Sweetwilliam from Cruikshank corners, Vermont, at yer sarvice. I'm a natural curiosity, too—a sorter museum an' menagerie consolidated. I'm a patent-right man, gentlemen—likewise am I a copyrightist. I can also preach a sermon, argy a lawsuit, play a game of cards, fight a mill, drive a stage or ar'ything else you've a mind to set me at. Oh! I'm a snorter, I am, and my name is Sweetwilliam. If ye wanten fight, pilgrims, ye jest wire me a telegram, and in the prophetic jerk of a lamb's tail, I'll be ready!"

A queer-looking old codger was the stranger. He was clad from head to foot in overall stuff of hemlock color—wore boots that must have been at least twelve in size, an old Greeley plug hat of whitish color, with Greeley goggles to

match, while the greater portion of his face was locked up in an immense bushy red beard.

The end of his nose, too, was suspiciously red, as if he were in the habit of taking a Sunday smile oftener than was healthy for the delicacy of his complexion.

He was armed with four large calibre revolvers and a couple of knives, in his belt, while the hilts of several cavalry pistols protruded from the tops of his boot-legs proving beyond peradventure that he was "heeled" like an arsenal.

And the crowd saw it, and hesitated.

Hesitated—not because of any particular love or respect for the man, but because once upon a time in the earlier days of the town, there had one day sailed into their midst a man of this peculiar type, who had made his brags that he had sailed down from the upper divide for the sole purpose of having a fraces and cleaning out the town—and he had done it, too!

Not fancying his insinuations they had rubbed against him and a general pitched battle ensued, at the conclusion of which the man from the divide announced himself as highly entertained, and walked out of town without having received a scratch.

While behind him he left six dead men and a score or more of wounded, as evidence of his prowess.

That was why these Tombstoneites looked down upon uncle Sam'l Sweetwilliam with so much doubt; and their estimate of him was not decreased when he deliberately drew a pair of revolvers and cocked them.

"Hurrah! do you see, gents?" 'Shian Sal cried, delightedly. "I've got a backer right from Yunker Hill, and you kin bet he's a darling, too! So if what you're after is a reg'lar bony-fried picnic, now's the time to set the thing a-whirlin'. Fer it ain't no use o' talkin'—Sally from 'Shian is goin' ter stay in this hyar town jest as long as she pleases, an' she an' Sweet Bill here kin prove it by a large majority."

"There seems to be a divided opinion about that!" Mike Missouri said, rising. "I propose we take a vote on the matter!"

"Voting is unnecessary!" a stern, strange voice cried, its clear, firm tones penetrating distinctly to every portion of the room. "The man who raises a hand to harm 'Shian Sal shall die by the agency of one of the deadly tubes gazing at him. Look! behold! the power of Deadwood Dick you see!"

In startled alarm they gazed around them in quest of the speaker, but could not see him. The voice had seemingly descended from the ceiling, and they were puzzled—until Sal cried, pointing toward the windows on either side of the saloon:

"Look, fools!—don't you see the fix you're in? Deadwood Dick has got you at his mercy!"

They did look—they saw—they comprehended.

Pressing against the panes of every window were several rifle muzzles, all pointing upon the crowd of citizens who would have 'Shian Sal quit the town. Who were the men that manned the deadly array of weapons, could not be seen, but the words of warning had advised that they were followers of Deadwood Dick.

All in the saloon stood gazing at one another in doubt and silence, not knowing what else to do; then the same weird, stern voice spoke again—this time seemingly right in their midst, causing them to gaze about in consternation.

And this was the admonition:

"Listen, men of Tombstone! It is your enemy who now addresses you—your enemy because you refused to have me as a friend. I have promised you my vengeance; I have worked to attain it, and now it is within my grasp. This place is surrounded by enough of my men to cut you to pieces. You now have two chances: Any man who wishes to join my band, for the purpose of enforcing order and putting down lawlessness in this town, can leave by the front door, one at a time, where they will be received by my men, bound, and taken to my retreat and the oath of Protectives administered to them. Those who refuse to accede to this offer will be marked, and one shall pay the penalty of their folly, per day, until the town is rid of the ruffianly crew that now holds sway. If law can not be had by reason and sustained by the people, Deadwood Dick is just the lad as can and will enforce it. Therefore the honest, and peaceably disposed, will choose the best course; the lawless and ruffianly can have what is left!"

Following this address there was silence. It was a struggle with many to decide which pro-

position to accept, while others drew their conclusions at once, in one way or the other.

"Come, gents—you see this is business, with Dicky from Deadwood, at the helm, and there's plenty o' prospect-holes a-waitin' fer them as don't wanten abide by ther golden rule!" 'Shian Sal cried, merrily. "Oh, et does me good to see ye right whar ye can't say yer soul's yer own!"

"Yas, b'yees, I've allus obsarved thet strict attention ter bizness allus brings things to a focus. Now, gents, my name is Sam'l Sweetwilliam, an' mebbe my say ain't wuth a row of pins, but I allow about ther starchiest thing ye kin do is to jine, fer I've heerd tell some purty hard stories o' him, and am 'goin' to have a brass statuer made o' him, an' entered accordin' ter ther act o' Congress. Come, now—who steps out first?"

"I, for one, for I think I see a strong inducement!" a man answered, leaving the saloon, forthwith—and he was one of the principal mine owners of the town.

His action literally set the ball a-rolling, for others followed his example, until there was a perceptible thinning out in the crowd. Nor did it stop until full half or more of the "commit-tee" were gone. The remainder, determined men of the ruffian type, stood beneath the lamplight in the Eureka saloon, huddled together, and engaged in a low conversation.

It was evident they were prepared, or at least resolved, to stand their ground.

"Last call!" the stern voice of Deadwood Dick was heard to say. "Does any more desire to accept of the mercy of Deadwood Dick?"

"Nary a man, heer!" one of the bolder rebels declared. "We ain't o' the stuff ter be skeered out—not nuch!"

"Then prepare to receive the consequences as they are meted out to you!" was the reply, coming from an opposite direction to the previous speech. "Away, men, to the retreat, and do your duty as I have directed."

And, almost immediately the thud of many horses' feet was heard, dashing away.

CHAPTER IX.

MISSOURI MAKES A DISCOVERY.

THEY were gone—these Protectives as they styled themselves—and it was not until the hoofstrokes of their horses had died out that the handful of men yet remaining within the Eureka saloon dared to give a sigh of relief. An' after the sigh they walked up to the bar, to a man, and lubricated with a liberal quantity of the stuff sold for whisky, which, be it said to the credit of Miss Sally of 'Shian, was the best article that could be found in that delectable region.

Then the gang dispersed, to see what damage the road-protectives of Deadwood Dick had done to other parts of the young metropolis—all but Missouri, and Sam'l Sweetwilliam, and he soon fell asleep, to all appearances, in a chair near the rear end of the room.

It was not until this event that the man who looked like Deadwood Dick, ventured to speak. He then approached the bar, behind which Sal was standing, and leaning upon the counter, he gazed at her, steadfastly.

"Sally Sheldon, what is the matter with you?" he asked, reproachfully. "Have you suddenly grown crazy, or are you only trifling, in hopes of getting rid of me?"

"Well, as I don't experience any signs of insanity, I dare to presume that the latter would be the likeliest conclusion for you to adopt, if any," was the composed answer, as the girl busied herself in arranging some decanters.

"But see here!" Missouri cried, smiting the counter with his fist. "I won't have no foolery. Since that devilish road-agent whom I unfortunately resemble, came here, you have not been the same woman you were before."

"Never was a woman—simply a gal—that's all," Sal retorted. "Reckon I'm 'Shian Sal, just the same as I used to be."

"But not the same to me."

"Humph! Was I ever anything to you, Mike Missouri?"

"Yes, you know you were. We were on friendly terms generally speaking, and you had acknowledged to me that you would marry me some day in the future."

"When I couldn't find any one else—ha! ha! ha! Mike Missouri, you are a fool—a knave and a fool. Why, do you s'pose a divine creature of my royal standing and good looks could care for a miserable gambler and rouse, like you? Pshaw! they'd better put you in a cage, instead of me."

"Curse you! It is folly for you to trifle with me, in this manner, for I've sworn to have you,

even though I may have to dye my hands in blood."

"Oh dear—don't *gore* me with any more such tragic passages, or I shall surely faint!" Sally protested, facetiously, putting up her hands. "I do detest Shakespeare."

"Perhaps you also detest that infernal road-agent, Deadwood Dick?" he sneered fiercely.

"Oh, you bet I don't!" she said, provokingly. "I think he's jest old peaches—cream, sugar and all. Why, do you know, the very first chance I get I'm going to pop to him?"

Missouri grew fairly livid with rage, his eyes growing wild in expression.

"We shall see if you will!" he hissed. "Henceforth will I make it my sole and only purpose to hunt that dog of a road-agent down to death—then, if that does not cure you of your idiocy, I'll kill you too, and prevent any one else from getting you."

"All right. Just before my funeral let me know about it, so I can have a shroud made!" was the sarcastic retort, as Missouri turned and stalked from the saloon uttering unintelligible curses.

After leaving the saloon, the gambler strode up the street toward the outskirts of the town, where he owned a cabin, in which it was his habit to spend such portions of his nights, as were not devoted to card-playing, and a precious few hours they were, as a rule.

Wrapt in anger and jealous passion as he strode along, the gamester failed to note that he was followed, and that, too, by a woman.

She had been following him from the neighborhood of the Eureka, and continued to shadow him, at a respectful distance, until they were just beyond the edge of the settlement. Then she gained on him rapidly, overtook him, and laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"Stop!" she said, imperatively.

He wheeled about, as though shot.

"Hello! the devil—a woman! What do you want, madam?"

"I want you, Jack!" she said, throwing up her veil, and revealing the face of Miss Clyde.

"Ha! ha! such a surprise, eh?"

Missouri stood like one struck dumb, a grayish pallor gradually overspreading his countenance, and his hands opening and shutting, convulsively.

"You—you!" he gasped. "I thought you were dead!"

"And hoped so—in fact, made no effort to save me, when I fell overboard that wild night on Lake Erie. But I was luckily picked up, and am just as lively as a chip, you bet!"

Missouri's countenance fell, a trifle, at the assertion.

"So I perceive," he said in a reluctant tone.

"But, of all things, how in the world came you to visit this place?"

"Oh, indeed! Why I came with my papa—that is, my adopted papa, you see!" she said, airily.

"Ah! so you've adopted a *paterfamilias* to manage you, eh? Well, I'm cussed glad of that. It saves me the undesirable responsibility."

"No, it don't, sir. You are my liege lord, just the same as you used to be. But, say, aren't you glad to see me, Jack?"

"Well, that depends on circumstances. If you mind your own business, don't interfere with my business, and keep at a proper distance, all right."

"But I won't mind your business, Jack Jarecki—no, *indeed* I won't! I've found out all about you, and you'll find I am just as shrewd as I used to be. I've inquired all about you since I've been here, and find that you are Mr. Mike Missouri, now, and a gambler. Also, that you are making love to a brazen piece, who wears pants, because she owns a gold mine. Now, this will never do, Jacky—never do. I'm yourn, and you can't git out of it, and I mean to stick tighter to you than a bundle of wax. Besides, I'm considerably more of an attraction now than I used to be, for you see the governor has promised to make me his heir, when he shuffles off."

"Humph! promises, like hen-fruit, are often unreliable. Who's the aforesaid adopter?"

"Senator Clyde!"

"Phew!" and the gambler scratched his head.

"How well 'heeled' is he?"

"Fifty thous."

"Pshaw! 'Shian is worth double. Reckon you and I can't harness up again, dear. Too much at stake, you see!"

"Then you are a dead man," she said, drawing a revolver, and thrusting it in front of his face. "Promise to own me as your wife or I'll kill you, now!"

He had but one choice.

CHAPTER X.

THE INVALID HEIRESS.

EARLY in the following forenoon we will look in upon another scene of our drama of the hills, which was set within the interior of a humble shanty, about a half-mile from the Eureka Saloon on the outskirts of the town.

The exterior was rough and unpainted like the exteriors of scores of other similar habitations in the vicinity, while the interior was by no means a palace, but furnished in the primitive style of most of the border abodes. Everything was clean, however, from floor to furniture, and evidenced the supervision of a neat housekeeper.

There was for furniture a trio of chairs, a table, stove, cupboard, a mirror and a few pictures upon the wall, and a bed in one corner, upon which lay a young girl in a half-reclining position, bolstered up by pillows.

With a wealth of hair as crimp and wavy as the current of a river, reaching to her waist, she was at once pretty and attractive, with a pure, prettily chiseled face, a sweet mouth and pearly teeth, and bright blue eyes that had in themselves a world of expression.

A young Chinaman was busy clearing away a tray of dishes from a stand near the bed, when there came a knock at the door.

It startled both him and the girl, for she threw down a book she was reading, and raised herself partly on her elbow.

"Somebody knocked at our door, Sam," she said. "Who can it be?"

"Melican man, mebbe—muchee go see!" and the Celestial made haste to open the door.

The moment he did so, a man stepped unceremoniously into the shanty, and doffed his hat to the invalid.

And that man was none other than Senator Clyde!

"Ah! pardon my abrupt intrusion, young lady, but am I not addressing the daughter of the late Jasper Clyde?" he asked, in his blandest manner, rubbing his hands together.

"Yes, I am Cora Clyde," the young lady replied, "and the daughter of Jasper Clyde, familiarly known as Jack Clyde."

"Then, by Jove I have found you at last. I am Senator Clyde, from Washington, and your own uncle, on your father's side of the family."

And his Dignity of the Senate walked forward, and thrust out his hand, which Miss Clyde declined to take.

"Excuse me, sir," she said, "but you must have made a mistake. My father never mentioned to me that he had a brother."

"Very likely, as Jack and I never got along any too well—though it was no fault of mine. He was of a different—of a more stern and exacting nature than I; therefore, we cut loose early, and have never been within a hundred miles of each other since."

"Then, sir, how comes it that you are here, now?"

"Oh, as to that, your father wrote me previous to his death that I had better come out into this section, and locate a claim—so I came, having no idea that I should find him dead and buried, on my arrival."

"Yes, my father died some time ago—a very long time, it seems to me, who miss him so much. Will you be seated, sir?"

"Thank you, yes. I see that you are not yet quite satisfied about the relationship existing between us, but I assure you it is as I represent. I am your uncle, and since I have come prepared to spend a few months in this country, if I can offer you any assistance, you need not hesitate to command it."

"I don't know that you can be of any assistance to me, sir. If so, and I deem it expedient, I will let you know."

"But I understand that you are already in some trouble concerning property, here in this place, my dear."

"True, but I have confidence all will be righted in the end. You see, my father was one of the first ones to come here and strike paying dirt, and he accordingly staked off a considerable tract of land, and entered it, according to law. Since his death much of this territory has been confiscated by squatters and roughs—indeed, all of the gold-bearing portion, thereby leaving me little or nothing out of what should be a fortune to me."

"Well, well, this is a pretty state of affairs, indeed, and must be looked to. If you will allow me, I will act for you in the matter. Of what value may this property left you by your father be set at?"

"I believe he calculated it was worth fifty thousand dollars at the time of his death, when it was but little worked."

"Ah! then probably it would be safe to place its value at a hundred thousand, now. Pretty snug little sum, upon my word. Now, then, you are a woman, and besides, a cripple, I am told, unable to leave your room. Therefore you will need some earnest and trustworthy friend to guide your matters through for you. Being your uncle, and feeling a natural sympathy for you, why cannot I enter your service and endeavor to recover and restore to you this confiscated property?"

"Oh, sir, I don't know whether to trust you, or not. True it is that it is my desire to recover this property, but you are a stranger to me, and I do not know you, nor am I inclined to trust one unknown to me, as there are many bad, bold, scheming men in this mining country."

"True, there are. But if I give you my word of honor as a gentleman, will you not believe in me? Do I look like a man who is dishonest or has led a life disreputable? Far from it. For years I have been a steady, faithful believer in the teachings of the Gospel, and all my life have been straightforward and upright in my dealings. It is for no selfish pecuniary motive that I wish to serve you, for I have a plenty of wealth to serve me through my remaining years. It is only my interest as your father's brother that urges me to look sharp after the interests of my orphan niece."

"And, although I may be wrong in so doing, I will trust you," Cora said, "for surely no honest man could wish to deceive or cheat an honest girl in my circumstances."

"Certainly not—certainly not!"

"But how will you go to work to recover the claims?"

"I shall first make a reconnaissance and take in the different points of the situation, and then consult with you. In a few days, I have no doubt something important can be done. I will, now, bid you good-day and send my daughter, Celeste, around to call on you."

CHAPTER XI.

A TASTE OF BULLET AND STEEL.

THE turn-over of a large majority of the citizens, to Deadwood Dick's gang, was the cause of a great excitement, during the day, and men and women might have been seen grouped about the street in grim consultation.

Though the young knight of the saddle had promised nothing of the kind, these rebels against peace momentarily expected an attack from him and his backers, and plans of protection were discussed. About noon the larger share of the crowd assembled in one body, in an empty shaft-house, on the opposite side of the creek, and a general secret session was held, the result of which was not revealed by those who had a hand in it.

After that every man and woman wore a belt of weapons, which seemed to augur that they were determined to stand in open defiance to the will of the new ruler.

Little work was done during the day, about the mines, and night brought the male portion of the crowd again to the Eureka saloon.

It seemed as if they had collected there for a general drunk, for rapid "lubricating" seemed the order of the hour.

To-night, no effort was made to disturb 'Shian Sal, who presided complacently behind the lunch-counter, leaving the Celestial to deal out the liquid inspiration, on the opposite side.

The later grew the hour the noisier and more boisterous grew the crowd, until appearances seemed to indicate that a general row would be the result.

Then it was that 'Shian Sal coolly mounted the bar with a pair of revolvers in hand, which were cocked, ready for business.

"Gents!" she said, in a business-like way, "you can't have any more drink in the Eureka to-night. When men ain't got no control over their appetites, et's time fer 'em to quit."

There was a murmur of dissent at this speech, but no attempt made to dispute, for when the young woman from 'Shian held weapons in her hand, there was but little use to dispute her authority, with any hopes of success.

Shortly after, the queer old codger, Sam'l Sweetwilliam made his appearance in the saloon, and sauntered about without saying anything to any one, but keeping a sharp eye on all those around him. There were savage scowls among the ruffian element in the room, at his entrance, and a general exchange of glances that seemed to indicate that there was trouble brewing.

This trouble came to a crisis, when as Sweetwilliam approached the counter and engaged in

a conversation with 'Shian Sal, the ruffian, Frightful Fred, arose, strode across the floor, and slapped Sweetwilliam heavily upon the shoulder.

"See heer, old feller, it's played out!" he cried, at which the crowd began to rise. "This is a cussed unhealthy climate fer rats, an' when we ketch 'em we generally work 'em up inter pies. Therefore, as we smell a large mice about you, here ye go!"

And, quickly leveling a revolver at the Vermonter's head, he fired.

The weapon was knocked upward however, by Sal, thus saving the intended victim from death.

Wheeling the next instant, Sweetwilliam dealt the ruffian a terrible blow, in the face, straight from the shoulder, and this was the signal for the battle—not the first one in the life of Deadwood Dick, for Deadwood Dick and Sweetwilliam were, as was revealed by the pretended Vermonter pulling off his false wig, one and the same person.

Well enough did the young Dakotan know when the rough, Frightful Fred assailed him that his disguise had been "twigged," and he also realized with quick intuition that no mercy would be shown him—that if he left the Eureka alive, it must be his own prowess that should hew him a path to liberty. For, aside from 'Shian Sal, he had no backing now, to hope for, his followers all being away in the mountains.

In an instant after the fall of Frightful Fred, revolvers and knives were drawn, and a rush made at the young chief, several shots being fired.

Then, with a vengeful yell, Deadwood Dick advanced, firing right and left with deadly accuracy and rapidity, and literally mowing a pathway before him toward the rear of the saloon.

Standing behind the counter, 'Shian Sal also used his own revolvers with telling effect.

Crack! bang! shriek—the saloon became a pandemonium of sounds;—men fell with yells of pain—curses and oaths; the crack of revolvers and clashing of knives prevailed on either hand.

It soon became evident that the ruffians were fighting among themselves; the room filled with dense smoke, leaving the crowd in a film of uncertainty.

Throwing his empty weapons on the floor, Deadwood Dick drew a knife in either hand, and cut right and left, hoping to reach an open window, at the rear of the saloon.

But the right of way was contested by a line of howling ruffians; 'Shian Sal saw the young Dakotan stagger; she sprang over the counter and caught him ere he fell.

Then, to the amazement of the mob, a large trap opened in the floor, just in front of her, and with Deadwood Dick in her arms she gave a defiant yell, and leaped boldly down through the aperture—down—down out of sight, while the saloon above trembled with howls of baffled rage from those who had been lucky enough to get off with their lives.

As soon as thoughts could be collected, and any order whatever, established, a torch was lighted, and thrown down into the hole beneath the floor, to ascertain if it were a cellar, well, or shaft, and a dozen pairs of wolfish eyes watched the burning fagot descend.

Down—down it went a couple of seconds—then there was a "chug," a hiss, and sputtering sound, and all was dark. The torch had been put out by coming in contact with water.

"That settles it. They've gone to their death in an old well of water!" Mike Missouri cried. "Let 'em alone an' see how they'll enjoy their bath."

"Get another torch and a pole!" Senator Clyde ordered. "The water may not be very deep, and there may be some way for them to escape."

His order was readily obeyed.

A couple of poles were soon produced, and a torch fastened to one, and lowered into the aperture. Examination by such light as was thus afforded disclosed the fact that the excavation beneath the floor was a large cellar, which was filled only partially with water.

The measuring pole on being lowered revealed that the water was not more than waist deep.

On listening, nothing could be heard of the fugitives, nor could anything be seen of them by aid of the torchlight.

The walls of the cellar were apparently without a break—where then were the Dakotan and 'Shian Sal?

Echo answered, "Where?"

Probably at the bottom of the cellar.

There seemed no other conclusion to draw.

"I reckon they're gone to be eternal mermaids," a miner said.

"There's no way fer 'em to escape, as the walls 'pear solid, an' as they can't live under water, it looks quite nateral that they're gone to visit old Neptune."

"Probably. To-morrow, to satisfy our curiosity, we'll have the cellar-bottom dragged," Senator Clyde announced.

Then he took his departure, chuckling to himself, now that he had unexpectedly gotten rid of one of his most thorough enemies.

Mike Missouri was also somewhat elated.

"True I have lost one prize," he muttered, "but as a case of emergency I can turn back to Celeste."

On jumping through the trap Sal had dropped upon her feet in the water, still supporting Deadwood Dick partly over her shoulder.

"Let me down," he quickly said. "I am all right again—I was only staggered for a moment. Where are we?"

"In a cellar. Take my hand, for we must get out of here quickly, if at all."

He obeyed, and she led the way through the water, the darkness being intense.

A few steps and then she placed one end of a stout rope in his hand, which hung down from above.

"Climb, now, if you can," she said.

He needed no second invitation, and, badly wounded though he was, he went bravely upward, hand over hand.

A few seconds' labor brought him out of the impromptu bath-vault into a small closet, or cupboard, provided with shelves containing edibles and bottles, and a door that he judged opened into some other apartment.

'Shian Sal soon joined him and then drew up the rope and quietly closed a trap-door, thus making the means of their escape a mystery to any one who might search the cellar.

"Sh!" she said, motioning him not to speak above a whisper. "We are safe for the present, if we keep quiet. This closet opens into the saloon, and when the gang leaves it, the path of escape is easy. Are you wounded, sir?"

"Yes, I must confess I am," was the reply, in a fainter tone than Deadwood Dick was accustomed to speak in. "I have received several bullets and have lost more blood than I ever lost before in a battle."

"And there is no means at hand to help you. Would to heaven those ruffians would leave the saloon, so that I could take you where you could rest!"

CHAPTER XII.

MOLL'S MANIFESTO.

BUT the roughs apparently were not inclined to vacate.

They had been cheated out of their vengeance upon Deadwood Dick—they had likewise driven off the proprietress of the Eureka, and now they proposed to drown the bitterness of their defeat in an inundation of the ardent, as long as the stock in hand should last.

The first part of the ceremonies was inaugurated by their holding the Chinaman, and pouring whisky down him until he was oblivious of all that was transpiring around him.

Then the ruffian, Frightful Fred, took the self-appointed position of barkeeper, and proceeded to deal out the liquor in a liberal way that made him the prime favorite of the hour, not forgetting to deal full more liberally to himself than the rest.

For a couple of hours the noise was deafening, with singing, shouting, cursing and fighting; then a gradual lull followed, which finally ended, and all became silent within the Eureka.

Overcome by incessant indulgence of their appetites, they had evidently all fallen asleep—or rather, into a drunken stupor.

In the closet 'Shian Sal crouched upon the floor, with Deadwood Dick lying across her lap, while she chafed his hands and endeavored to bring him back to life and consciousness, the latter having long since forsook him, and the brave girl was not quite sure but what he was in reality dead, it was so dark and he was so silent.

It was with a rapidly beating heart and great impatience that Sally waited for the last audible sound out in the Eureka, and even when that event came, she dared not leave her place of hiding without allowing several minutes more to elapse to make sure they were in a dead stupor—these ruffians whom whisky had overcome, when other weapons failed.

At last she carefully laid Deadwood Dick off her lap, and rising opened the door into the saloon, cautiously.

The scene she had already anticipated. The

entire gang were strewn about on chairs and tables or on the floor, entirely oblivious of what was going on about them.

"A better termination than I expected," Sal muttered. "The only pity is there had not been p'izen in every swaller they took. Now, then—to get Dick out of the closet and to a place of safety. First, I must bring him back to consciousness, so that he may be able to assist himself somewhat."

She partly raised and dragged him from the closet into the bar-room; then procuring some liquor from behind the bar, she poured some between his parched lips.

Then, tearing open his jacket and shirt, she made an examination of his wounds, and found that there was out of half a dozen flesh wounds, but one that promised to long inconvenience the invincible hero from Dakota, and this she dressed and bandaged to the best of her ability.

The few drops of liquor soon had the effect to bring color back to the wounded man's cheeks, and he gradually recovered consciousness. Sal had a warm sling prepared for him, which he drank, and it brought back to him something of his former strength, so that he was soon able to stand once more upon his feet.

"Heaven reward you, my young friend," he said, taking 'Shian's hands. "But for you, I am afraid Deadwood Dick's name would no longer be a terror along the frontier. How shall I ever be able to repay you?"

"We'll not talk about pay, now," the girl said, calmly, "for escape is yet to be effected before we are safe. This night's business closes my career as a saloonist, and it behooves me to keep shady, as well as yourself. Come! I have a place in view where we can remain in hiding until you are able to be around again."

She took his arm and assisted him to walk from the saloon, for his steps were yet feeble and unsteady.

Outside the street was deserted, and dark. Further up the gloomy thoroughfare were heard the sounds of music and revelry, coming from the dance-house.

Closing the door of the Eureka behind her, Sal led the way to the shanty of Cora Clyde, the orphan cripple.

"Here we will secrete ourselves to await further events," she said. "Cora Clyde and I are friends, and I know she will not refuse me."

Dick started, on hearing the name, faint though he was.

It was another of the names that was connected with his strange dream—but he was too weak to question, at present.

'Shian knocked at the door, and at first there was no response, but a second rap brought the Chinaman to answer the summons.

"Tell your mistress that it is 'Shian Sal and a wounded friend," she said, in answer to the Celestial's stare.

"Then come in at once!" Cora's voice cried, from within, and they accordingly entered, where a warm welcome was accorded them by the cripple.

Explanations were duly made, by 'Shian, that satisfied Cora's scruples against sheltering as notorious a person as Deadwood Dick, and she said:

"There is the room adjoining this which Mr. Deadwood Dick can use, and you, Sally, can go up-stairs. I will have my Celestial servant wait upon you, when there is no danger, so that you can remain secreted without detection."

"If there should be any search for us—then, what?" 'Shian asked.

"I don't know. I don't anticipate a search. If one is made—well, emergency brings invention, you know."

Accordingly the Chinaman assisted Dick to his room, and carefully and neatly dressed his wounds, proving himself to be no inferior sort of a surgeon.

Once quiet in bed the wounded Dakotan felt easier.

It had been the first battle he could remember, where he had come out so badly wounded.

But he was thankful that his wounds were not more serious, and that the chances of speedy recovery were in his favor.

The following day was a reckless one, in Tombstone—reckless because the debauches of the previous night staggered about the streets again in a state of semi-intoxication, and ready for any deviltry or evil act that might strike their fancy.

The Eureka was gutted of all its stock of liquors and edibles, and a division made.

Then, Senator Clyde and Mike Missouri, who seemed to have joined forces, made a proposition that the watery cellar be dragged, and the

proof that Deadwood Dick and 'Shian Sal were really dead, be established.

In this they were, of course, unsuccessful, as no traces could they find of the bodies of their supposed victims. Nor did further search reveal the way in which they escaped, which left the matter wrapt in impenetrable mystery.

Thus matters were forced to rest, and the roughs of which the population now mainly consisted, made merry over the division of liquor as best they knew how.

During the day Senator Clyde paid a visit to the shanty of Miss Cora, little suspecting that his enemy, or rather, his enemies, were therein concealed.

"You see, I've been sizing up the matters of your estate," he announced, "and thought I'd drop in and report. I find affairs hardly as encouraging as I expected. The squatters who occupy your lands are a set of ruffians, at the best, who, since the departure of many of the better class of people to join the infernal rascal, Deadwood Dick, may safely be classed scums of creation. The worst part of it, is, these fellows cherish a delight in warring with females, especially you, as they seem to have a grudge against you, for some reason or other."

"Because I am a respectable and honest girl, I presume, without protection!" Cora said, scornfully. "Such men deserve—well, I don't know what."

"True they are ruffians of the deepest dye, and yet in order to have any deal with them one has to keep on the right side of them. While you are hated by them, I fancy I am in better standing, as when I came hither I at once paved the way with liberality, to gain popularity. You see there is nothing like popularity to business men. Therefore, though I cannot handle your case successfully in your name, I may be able to do so, in my own."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"This. The property now is vested in title to you, and so long as it remains so these men will remain obstinate, but, were you to deed it over to me—for a few days, only, understand, so that I could show them that they had me to buck against, I could easily dispossess them, without any trouble, and then quietly restore the title to you, without their present knowledge, until we get a better state of government, you see, and all would be serene and nice as pie."

"But I don't understand, sir. If I were to sign off, to you, why I should be the same as giving away all I have."

"Ostensibly, yes, but in reality no, as I should, as soon as I gained possession, deed the property back to you."

"How am I to know this to be so? After getting everything in your hands how do I know but what you will keep it, and tell me to go to grass?"

The Senator colored, and was fidgety.

"Why, child, how can you judge me so wrongly?" he said, rebukingly. "Do you for a moment think I could be guilty of such an outrage upon a helpless orphan?"

"I don't know," Cora said, doubtfully. "I have no positive proof of who and what you are, and don't consider it quite prudent to place such unlimited trust in a perfect stranger, who may, or may not be my uncle, or who might, or might not return me my property."

"But, supposing I was to deposit the sum of forty thousand dollars in your hand as security—would you trust me, then?"

"I should be more inclined to—yes. But, I shall have to think carefully over this matter, before rendering a decision."

"Very well. I will call to-morrow, accompanied by a lawyer, and if I can by honesty and faithful attention, serve my brother's child, believe me it will be a great pleasure to me."

Then tipping his hat politely, he took his departure.

"If it were not for his offer to secure me by a deposit of money, I should still be forced to believe that man a consummate villain, as his very presence causes me to shudder," the orphan said.

That same night one of the miners of the town, while passing along the street, was placed in possession of a letter by a roughly-dressed man who dashed swiftly down the street on horseback, and threw the letter in the miner's path—then away like the wind, ere he was recognized.

In some surprise the digger picked up the envelope which he found and hastened with it to the Eureka, where the crowd of the night previous had assembled for a fine "blow out."

Here he related his little adventure, concluding by holding up his letter.

"Let me have it and I will read it," Mike Missouri said. "It may be something of importance."

He tore off the wrapper and then read:

"CAMP OF PHANTOM MOLL."

"TO PEOPLE OF TOMBSTONE:

"I learn that by the late rebellion of the better portion of your people you are left short-handed, and in but poor condition to withstand an attack. Your oppressor, I understand, through a spy, is about to make a swoop down on you with his band of men, now over a hundred strong, and effectually wipe you out and take possession of the town. I being his enemy, propose you terms: Give me charge of the town with my band, you to join the same, but all to remain under the guise of citizens and under orders from me, and I will make Tombstone the hottest place Deadwood Dick ever tackled. Here, I will confiscate all the mining territory and divide it among you and my men, and the inauguration of my scheme shall only take place when I can treat you to a celebration banquet over the lynching of Deadwood Dick, whom I can produce almost immediately after taking possession of the town. If this plan is acceptable, build bonfires to-night at either end of the town, and we will be with you on the dawning of day. In good faith,
Signed
PHANTOM MOLL."

"P. S. If you refuse, Deadwood Dick's men will make mince-meat of you, sure."

CHAPTER XIII.

A TWOFOLD GAME.

AFTER a good rest, 'Shian came down-stairs, the following morning, looking fresh and pretty.

Cora upon her bed, which she rarely ever left, was partaking of her morning repast, which the Chinaman had prepared.

The two girls exchanged friendly greetings; then Sal gave an interrogative glance at the door of the room in which Deadwood Dick slept.

"How about Dick? Is he improving, all right?" she queried.

"At last accounts, yes," Cora replied. "I sent Sam in last night before bedtime, and he was then resting comfortably, and feeling in good spirits."

"I'm glad of it; he is a fine fellow and I admire him. You had a visitor, yesterday?"

"Yes; you overheard, eh?"

"I did, though I don't often play eavesdropper. I overheard his voice and wanted to learn what he was up to."

"Well?"

"Well, it seems his aim is to get the management of your property. Is this not so?"

"Yes. He claims to be my uncle, and wants to get my claims back for me."

"And therefore, wants you to sign off everything to him?"

"For a few days, yes, until he can regain possession."

"Don't you sign nothing. Mark my word for it, he's a shark, and if you turn anything over to him, you lose. Besides, I don't believe he's your uncle."

"You don't?"

"No, I don't."

"But as a guarantee of honesty on his part, and claiming that it is only for my interest he is working, he offers to deposit forty thousand dollars in my hands."

"Humph! a clever scheme. Your claim is worth double the amount, and he would be making forty thousand very easily, anyhow. Take 'Shian Sal's advice, and don't sign nothing."

"I will do so, I think. You have always been a dear good friend to me."

"No more than you have been to me. You're the only one o' my sex, here in Tombstone who has ever acted as tho' they considered me o' much account. By the way, I don't want you to take my views alone. We'll get Dick's opinion first, for he's level-headed."

She knocked upon the door of the Dakotan's room, but there was no answer.

Waiting a few moments she knocked again, this time louder, but still no answer.

"That's queer. A man o' his nerve and vigilance wouldn't sleep so sound without cause. Have you a key to the room?"

"It is not locked. Open it, and see if he is asleep."

Sal did open the door—then gave a cry of surprise. The bed was unoccupied, and Deadwood Dick was not in the room. An open window showed the means of his flight.

"He is gone!" 'Shian cried. "Either he has taken leave of his own accord, or has been kidnapped. Ah! maybe this will explain."

She picked up a slip of paper, which had been stuffed under the crack of the door, and examined it.

The contents were as follows:

"MISS CLYDE: I overheard and understood your interview with that rascal who is palming himself off as Senator Clyde, and think I begin to suspect who he is. At any rate he is no uncle to you. Nevertheless, accept the forty thousand dollars, and keep it until I can examine it."

"If he insists on your signing a deed, tell him you cannot do so without the consent of your guardian, being under age, and you can name me as your guardian. This will check him until I can perfect plans to restore law and order in this town, and at the same time, your claims to you."

"Believe me sincerely yours,
"DEADWOOD DICK."

"Bully fer Dick!" 'Shian exclaimed, enthusiastically. "Didn't I tell you he was level-headed? He sees ahead further than you or I can, an' I've got an idea that he expects the money the Senator is so flush with, ain't genuine."

"Perhaps you are right. Anyhow, it is a good plan he proposes, and I shall follow it, for I'd a hundred times rather trust him than this other man, whom I always have feared."

"I thank you for that, because—well, because I like him, I guess, better than most men I have met," 'Shian confessed.

At this juncture Sam, the Chinaman, picked up a ribbon from the floor of the room Dick had occupied, and handed it to 'Shian, with a grin.

"Ha! what's this?" the girl exclaimed, starting back, and growing pale.

"I see into it now, Miss Cora. Deadwood Dick is a prisoner among the mountain outlaws!"

"How do you know? What makes you think so?"

"This ribbon!"

"And what significance do you put in that ribbon?"

"More than I can tell you. It satisfies me that Phantom Moll has been in this house, and that she and her men took Dick with them on leaving, is equally apparent to me!"

"Then, what is to be done?"

"You follow Dick's instructions and I will go to his rescue!"

"You?"

"Yes, I! I want no better sport. Ha! ha! There's a denouement looming up, ahead, and I'm going to have a finger in it. Luckily, I have a disguise always with me, and it will come into play now."

She went to the room overhead, and soon returned, arrayed in a suit of well-worn overalls, together with stogy boots, slouch hat, and full beard and wig of a brown color.

The transformation was so complete that Cora was surprised.

"You look like a first class rough!" she said, merrily.

"And feel like one," the girl replied, sternly. "I've got business to the fore—a duty to do that in the name of humanity I should have, by all rights, done before. Good-by, now, and take care of yourself, and I will see you later."

She then took her departure, with a wild, determined expression in her pretty eyes.

That afternoon's stage brought a new man to town, who was what might have been termed in the vernacular of the mines "old business," for he at once rented an empty shanty on the main street, and hung out a hastily prepared sign, which read:

"PROF. DUGARME,

DOCTOR & LAWYER."

Senator Clyde, on his way to visit Cora, noticed the sign, and also the black-whiskered, seedy-looking individual in the doorway, and gave a chuckle of delight.

"He's my man when I want him," he muttered. "Ha! ha! yes—maybe in more than one sense!"

He was soon in the presence of the orphan, smiling and bowing with great suavity.

"I came first to hand you the guarantee," he said, "taking it for granted that you will have the good sense to accept"—and he handed her a neat package of considerable size. "I will now step down the street and prepare a deed—"

"You had better wait, first," Cora said, putting the package under her pillow, "as there is no particular hurry. I could not sign a deed without first obtaining my guardian's permission!"

"Your guardian, girl?"

"Ayl my guardian. Being under age, and not fully trusting you, I have deemed it advisable to choose a guardian to manage my affairs, and therefore cannot sign or do anything legal, without his consent!"

Clyde shut his teeth together to suppress an oath.

"And pray, whom have you chosen as your guardian?" he asked with an unconcealed sneer.

"A man, every inch of him, who goes under a title well known throughout the West—perhaps equally well known to you?"

"What! not—Deadwood Dick?"

"The same!"

"By the gods, this is bad. Why, child, that man is a villain and an outlaw."

"But an honest man, and a Deputy U. S. Marshal!"

"This is madness, and I will not have anything to do with your affairs, as long as this man is mixed up in them. Give me back my money, and I will go."

"On the contrary, by direction of my guardian, I should hold the money, as a proof against you!" Cora cried, and to back her declaration, she leveled a cocked revolver at his breast.

"You are a villain, sir, whoever you are, and your best action will be to keep very quiet, for the money in the package you gave me, is known to be counterfeit!"

The Senator paled in an instant, and with a vile curse he turned and stalked from the shanty.

"Ten thousand furies take that devil, Deadwood Dick!" he hissed, trembling with rage.

"But for him that plan would have prospered. But, let him beware! My turn will come yet and he shall feel how little mercy I have, for such as he. And as far as the girl is concerned, why, I have another and better scheme concocted for her especial benefit. And I will try it at once. If I get her property—so good! If I fail, why, I'll get my share of it when Phantom Moll makes the dive."

He went at once to Dugarme's establishment, the front part of which was used as an office, being furnished with rude chairs and a table. The proprietor, a seedy-dressed individual, with sweeping black beard, and matted hair, and green goggles, was engaged in smoking a grimy pipe, and nodded to a chair as an invitation to be seated.

"Do you deal in drugs?" the Senator asked, after a silence—"that is, do you handle—well, poisons?"

"Poisons?" the man exclaimed, with a faint French accent, giving a perceptible start.

"Y—yes—that is—well, you see, to make the matter plain, there is a private little matter pending wherein it is necessary for one party to subside from existence. See?"

"I comprehend," the doctor nodded. "You want to spill not ze blood, but have ze party die."

"Exactly—and naturally, too. It must first make her sick and then throw her into a stupor which will result in death."

"I have ze very zing you want. It is ze oil of many roots. One zingle little drop of it in a glass of water puts him to sleep and he never wake."

"Good! Excellent! Supply me with a sufficient quantity of this stuff and name your price."

"I charge you nosing till I see if it works. Den I charge you ze thousand dollare. See?"

"Very well. Give me the stuff and I will away."

The doctor arose and went behind a partition, soon returning with a small vial containing half a dozen drops of a thick, colorless liquid, which he handed to the Senator.

"One drop pe all you need," he said. "Return ze rest to me."

The would-be murderer nodded and left the shanty.

"To-night," he muttered, "I will pave the way for a funeral cortege. Ha! ha!"

That night bonfires were lighted on all the approaches to the town, to give the road-agents of Phantom Moll notice that they were welcome, and an hour later a gang of rough fellows, wearing beards and masks, and armed to the teeth, came swarming into the streets from all directions.

Phantom Moll was not with them, but stood alone on the top of the mountain plateau, where Deadwood Dick had parted with his rescuer, after being released from captivity among the road-agents. She was watching the reflection of the fires upon the sky, which the moon had not yet appeared to lighten.

"It is a move that at once increases my forces, and puts me in greater power," she was saying. "Of course a division of the band can attend to the road, while the remainder play as citizens, and work on all new-comers in the town!"

"Yes, but your rule is at an end, though, woman!" a stern voice cried.

The female bandit turned and stood face to face with—Shian Sal!

"You!" she articulated, in surprise—then she removed her mask and a face the exact counterpart of Shian's, was revealed.

"Yes, I," the girl replied, sternly, "and I wonder you do not tremble to see me."

"Humph! why should I? Are you so dangerous?"

"In that much that you must meet me as you agreed. A year ago, we parted as bad friends and sisters, to lead such lives as suited our fancy, each swearing not to cross the other's path, under penalty of a duel. You have crossed my path in sending your cutthroats down to take possession of that town in which I have property; also further, by kidnapping my friend, Deadwood Dick."

"Bah! I own the first, but deny the last charge."

"You deny that you have him in your power as a prisoner, dead or alive?"

"I do, most emphatically. You will need to look elsewhere."

"Not till one or the other of us falls and wipes out the mutual grudge between us. No better time can be chosen, so draw your weapon!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DREAM FULFILLED.

In a minute, the girls so greatly alike in appearance, stood confronting each other with knives in hand, the blades of which gleamed with deadly meaning.

In each face there was no trace of pity—nothing but sternness and fixed resolve expressed. Each eye gleamed with intense hatred—each right hand grasped its weapon as in a vise of steel.

"When I count one—two—three, advance, and may God be with the lucky as well as the unlucky one!" Shian cried, firmly. "If you repent even at this late hour, it will be better than never, sister."

"I repent nothing!" Phantom Moll said, with a bitter, reckless laugh. "I hate you, and would do the same o'er again."

"Then, you shall realize the meaning of my promise," Shian cried.

"One! two! three! stand on guard!"

And scarcely had she given the warning, ere she leaped forward, with knife upraised, the fury of a young tigress having mastery of her being.

But the duel was destined to be interrupted, and in a manner quite unexpected to each of the would-be contestants, for at this juncture, Deadwood Dick sprang from the shrubbery, close at hand and forced Shian gently back, while a half-dozen of his masked men, made a like *entree* upon the scene, and surrounded Phantom Moll.

"Phantom Moll, as you choose to term yourself, you are my prisoner!" Dick cried, bowing, with mock politeness. "The tables are slightly turned since last we met, and, as an officer of the law, I shall soon have the necessary honor of turning you over to my superior officer, the U. S. Marshal."

"No! no! this shall never be," Shian Sal cried, breaking loose. "Bitter foe though she has been to me, I will, as her sister, spare her the fate of hanging, and avert the humiliation to myself, by giving her her freedom!"

And, suddenly drawing a revolver, and before any one could prevent her, she leveled it at the breast of the girl-bandit and fired.

With scarcely a groan the erring young woman staggered and fell lifeless in the arms of one of the men, who sprang forward to catch her.

Then, crying bitterly, Shian turned and hurried away.

Deadwood Dick made no effort to stop her, but watched her with a pitying expression of countenance until she was out of sight.

"Perhaps it is better thus, as the woman would have eventually met a more lingering and dread fate. Several of you assist to carry her to the stronghold, where, after destroying the counterfeiting plates, we will leave her."

In the town of Tombstone the outlaws waited for the coming of their girl captain, but she came not; came not, when the shadows of yet another night began to fall.

A suspicion that she had been killed or captured, which had possessed the outlaws, earlier in the day, now grew to a conviction; so a

delegation of them waited upon Senator Clyde, and related their worst fears.

"It is bad," he confessed, his brow darkening, "for if she is lost, it is a loss we shall all feel bitterly."

"It is a loss that must be repaired," one of the outlaws declared, "for the gang will soon go to pieces without a captain. Why not you take the position?"

"Bah, no! I am content with being the grand Chief," and he laughed, villainously. "Besides, I have other work to attend to here. I will appoint Mike Missouri as temporary captain, and with half the men he must reach the rendezvous and rescue the 'tools' and bring them here. To lose them would be like losing our all."

A gang of the outlaws were at once selected, and with Missouri at their head, set out for the rendezvous, which they reached, a few hours later, where they were unexpectedly pounced upon by Deadwood Dick and over a score of his Protectives.

A desperate struggle for victory ensued—a battle of death it was, on both sides, in which the clash of knives and the roar of fire-arms took part in the chorus of screams and curses.

It finally ended, however, with the Protectives doubtfully victorious, for they had lost at least a third of their men and captured but half of the outlaws, alive.

And, what was worse, they had lost their leader—brave, fearless Deadwood Dick, whom every one of his men had learned to respect, and regard as invincible. He had been with them till nearly the last shot had been fired; then he was suddenly missed when victory was already within their grasp.

A search for him resulted in vain. Nowhere could he be found, and a suspicion that he had been seized and borne off by one or more of the outlaws, became rife.

Revengeful over this loss, the Protectives dragged the bodies of the slain from the cabin, and, be it said to their credit, gave them a decent interment; then, returning, set fire to the stronghold and watched it burn to the ground.

Deadwood Dick had given strict orders that all the outlaws who were captured should be taken to his retreat, which he had selected in a mountain cave, overlooking the town, and in close proximity to it.

To this cave the prisoners were conveyed, and the report of Dick's sudden disappearance was communicated to the other portion of the order of Protectives, a large body of whom had not participated in the fight, being mostly the Tombstoneites.

On hearing of the disastrous results of the battle, and of the probable capture of Deadwood Dick, the full band within the cave swore vengeance upon the heads of those within the town below, and preparations were made for an attack.

The Protectives still numbered considerably over half a hundred strong, and were confident of being able to score a victory, and accordingly, early in the following morning an attack was made upon the town, and the larger share of the crowd killed or captured, only a few escaping alive to tell the tale of woe and disaster that had overtaken them during the campaign of Dakota's famous young representative—Deadwood Dick.

Thus the town was won for the better, and those who had sensibly accepted Deadwood Dick's terms felt that they were inadequate to the task of expressing too many thanks to him who had been the presiding agency of turning a lawless horde of vice and crime into a quiet, orderly town.

The next day the U. S. Marshal arrived with a band of troops, to find that he was too late to do anything, except rope in the prisoners.

On being told of Deadwood Dick and his exploits, he expressed himself as both surprised and gratified that his deputy had proven such a valuable agent, and ordered that a search be made of the whole country for the young Dakotan or his body.

This search, with Shian Sal in the lead, went on for several days, but terminated without the hoped for result.

In the mean time peace, quiet and prosperity once more reigned in Tombstone, and Cora Clyde's claims had all been returned to her.

At the time of the attack upon the town Senator Clyde had very suddenly disappeared and had not been seen since—but, as one of the outlaws had made a confession that he, Clyde, was one of the ringleaders of the gang—in fact the president,—and that his daughter, so called, was one of the decoys, Miss Clyde was accordingly "pulled" and kept under guard, and a

sharp outlook kept up in hopes of capturing the Senator.

A few days later Cora Clyde was suddenly taken ill, and though kindly disposed neighbors paid her the most careful attention, all efforts seemed to fail and she seemed to be sinking into her eternal sleep.

She rallied toward the evening of the second day, long enough to speak.

"I feel that I have not long to live," she said, "and must speak. I have some property, and the profits thereof, after my death, I want spent for the erection of schools and a church here in Tombstone. The ownership of such property, however, I shall carry with me to the grave. Sallie, will you see that the deed to such is placed in my coffin? You will find it under my pillow."

Shian nodded, tearfully, and then the cripple sunk back, still and white, and just at sunset the word went out about the town that Cora Clyde was dead.

Kindly hands of the male sex shaped together a coffin of planed boards, and tender hands of the miners' wives robed the poor orphan girl for the grave, and laid her in the coffin.

Then the shanty was locked, and the dead left in quiet, as the funeral was not to take place till the morrow.

Celeste was imprisoned in a shanty not far from the late Eureka saloon, and one of the marshal's men stationed at the door.

That same night, as she was about retiring, the door opened and the Senator entered.

He had a blanket thrown over his head and shoulders, and was bleeding from an ugly knife wound in the cheek.

"Mercy! what is the matter?" Celeste gasped, starting back in alarm.

"Nothing! I got this by having to kill the guard. Come! it is dark without. We must first go to the cripple's cabin—then get miles hence in under the cover of darkness."

"Why go there?" Celeste gasped, hurrying on her wraps.

"Come! the girl is dead. The stuff I slipped into her water worked. She has had the deed to her property put in her coffin. We must get that, fly to Omaha, sell it, and leave for the East. It will not be so bad paying a job, after all, ha! ha! though the devil's been to pay all around."

They hurriedly left the place, and reached the Clyde shanty without discovery. By aid of a duplicate key which the Senator had, they gained entrance to the shanty, and closed the door behind them.

Within all was still as death. A tallow candle was burning dimly upon the mantle-piece. The coffin was resting upon a table in the center of the room, and looked grim and uncanny.

"Ugh! this is a cursed unpleasant job," Clyde muttered, huskily, "but it must be done. Stand here near the door, ready to escape, and I'll soon have the paper."

Then, in a half crouching position he crept stealthily toward the coffin. Nearer and nearer, step by step, he approached, until he at last hesitatingly reached forth his hand to touch the repository for the dead, when—

Suddenly, as if by magic the lid was hurled to the floor, and, erect and upright in the coffin, stood Deadwood Dick, with a pair of cocked revolvers leveled at the King of the Counterfeiters!

At the same instant the front door was burst open, and the U. S. Marshal and his men filed in, while, simultaneously, from the back entrance, Shian Sal and Cora appeared—the latter supported by Shian and Sam, the Celestial.

The tableau was complete!

"Senator Clyde, alias Akronelle, chief of counterfeiters, your game is up!" Deadwood Dick cried. "At last I recognize you, more fully. And you probably recognize the fact that the remarkable dream, I unsuspectingly told you of in the marshal's camp, has been more or less fulfilled. The poison you purchased of me—alias Dugarme—has only served to throw you into this trap, and I now cheerfully hand you over to the law, rejoicing that Deadwood Dick's Dream has come to so prosperous an end. And to all present I bid you all a pleasant *au revoir*; having fulfilled my mission here, I must away on the morrow to new fields of sport and adventure, going happy in the knowledge that I leave behind as a memento of this little campaign a clearer and more honest record for the famous name of—

DEADWOOD DICK."

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